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Gender and the Politics of Underdevelopment and Resistance in the Philippines

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Social Reproduction: From Women's Private Responsibility to Collective Concern

I have mentioned in chapter 4 that the peasant women perceive that there exists a sexual division of labor in the family. This sexual division of labor in the peasant home relegates social reproduction primarily on the women. Since child care is primarily defined as the woman's task, the social reproduction of the peasant class is therefore primarily placed on the peasant women's shoulders in addition to their farm work. Under the absence of any form of subsidy on child care, either from the state or from the landlords, this puts women in a triple oppression of gender, class, and work that middle-class women, who can afford to hire maids to do domestic work and child care, may not necessarily experience.

Thus, child care is another issue that becomes a context for collective action. The setting up of day care centers is one of the projects that some of KAMMI's local chapters have worked on. One good example is the day care project that a village chapter in Sablayan has put up in 1988. The women helped together in putting up the day care center. Ate Ara, who worked very hard in coordinating the setting up of the project, said she contributed quite a good amount of money "just to have the project going" ("para lang maipatuloy ang proyekto"). The other mothers also helped in contributing money or materials that they could afford for the building of the care center. The fathers also helped in building the

center, such as providing labor.

When the day care service began in 1988, the initial enrollment was about 34 children. The mothers assumed responsibility for providing a feeding program for the children. The day care teacher, who was also from the village, received a monthly allowance from Mindoro Institute for Development, at the request of the local chapter.

However, militarization again became a constraint and posed some set backs to the day care project. According to Ate Ara, the military labelled the project as "day care center of the New People's Army". The military warned the people, according to Ate Ara, not to go to the day care center. Because of this red-baiting, many got afraid, and the enrollment decreased. Only 7 remained in the program and was able to graduate. Ten children immediately stopped and another 10 withdraw one by one.

Yet, this local chapter persisted in pursuing the day care project. Because this project was responding to a local need in the village, eventually the enrollment increased to 55 childrem. The felt need somehow stood up to fear from the military's psychological strategy of repression. With the increase of enrollment the need for resources also increased. Even though the day care worker was getting an allowance, most of it would would be spent on getting materials for the children or for teaching. The feeding of the children were still shouldered by the mothers. Under this circumstances,

the day care care sessions were divided into morning and afternoon sessions to accomodate the growing enrollment, and a fee of 15 pesos for the whole year was also set up. The local chapter also requested the local government to provide a large table for the children, and it agreed to do so. The local government also agreed to their request, according to Ate Ara, to provide the allowance of the day care teacher of 240 pesos a month. That the local chapter was able to get the support of the local civil government to respond to some of the needs of the care center was a good strategy of providing legitimacy to the project against the black propaganda of the military.

In June 1989, the 55 children graduated. The occasion provided a context for the cultural expression of the peasant women. The local chapter organized a graduation program. They hired a sound system for 110 pesos, of which 90 pesos was provided by Ate Ara. Ate Ara also composed a song for the community singing of the parents during the program. The song captured the history behind the putting up of the project, the contraints they had to overcome, and the joy in seeing their children graduate through the program. It also includes credit to those who supported the project, gave recognition to the contribution of the mothers in providing food for the children coming to the care center, and an appeal to continue upholding ("itaguyod") the Day Care Center and the organization of the peasant women in the village through continued united action.

The song goes this way:

English Translation:

Uphold the Day Care
the Organization of Mothers
Here in Paetan.
It's only now I learned
Day Care is good,
It is here that I found out
In the Organization of Mothers.
All the hardships here
We had overcome
When we saw and experienced our
Children's first graduation.
At first there was dismay,
And I was disturbed
Because they said
This was not it claimed to be.
But, in reality they did not know
D.S.W.D., Mindoro Institute, and Baranggay Officials
Supported us in everything.
And for the food
The mothers assumed responsibility.
That is why we must have unity all the time,
Let us work together,
Uphold the Day Care
The Organization of Mothers
Here in Paetan.

Native Dialect Version:

Itaguyod ang Day Care
Samahan ng Nanay
Dito sa Paetan.
Ngayon ko lang nalaman
Day Care pala'y inam,
Dito ko natagpuan
Sa Samahan ng mga Nanay.
Lahat ng kapaguran
Dito ay nalunasan,
Nang makita at madama ang unang pagtatapos,
Ng ating mga anak.
Noong una'y nayayamot, at
Dahil sa sabi nila
Ito raw ay bugos.
Ngunit di nila alam
Na sa katunayan lang
Ang D.S.W.D. ang siyang gabay
Ang Mindoro Institute,
At Baranggay Officials
Sila ang sumuporta sa lahat na ng bagay.

At sa pagkain naman
Ay sagot na ng mga nanay,
Kaya't tayo ay makaisa sa lahat ng oras.
Tayo ay magsasama,
Itaguyod ang Day Care
Samahan ng nga Nanay
Dito sa Paetan.

The success of this day care project in this village provided a good example for the other village chapters. In Calintaan, some of the mothers who were members of the local chapter there, were also informally talking about the possibility of setting up a day care center since there are so many children in the area. In one village for example there are so many small children. But in this village this is not yet given a formal organizational expression since the village chapter there was just beginning to revive at the time of my fieldwork. In Mamburao, a newly-set up local chapter also had a plan to set up a day care center. Some preliminary discussion of it as an organizational agenda already took place, wherein the members proposed that they would contribute materials needed to build the center. At the time of my fieldwork, however, according to Ate Sarisa who is a major organizer of this chapter, the meeting for the formalization of the project had been postponed because of farm work that the women must immediately attend to.

The collective efforts that are pooled together by the setting of child care centers by some local chapters of KAMMI, indicate that there is a growth in viewing social reproduction as a community responsibility from an individualist view of

it. The grassroot politicization of child care can procure local government support of it, as indicated by the experience of the local chapter in Sablayan, but the initiative came from the women and it was their persistence despite military labelling that brought positive results. This shows the importance of grassroot organizing in social change.

However, the setting up of day care centers as primarily a women's project has limits and seems paradoxical. While it makes child care a community issue, it does not directly challenge the ideological definition of child care as primarily a "woman's domain". For example, the social maintenance of the center of the Sablayan local chapter, such as the cooking of the meals for the children, is done mainly by the mothers. The fathers were not normally involved in such task.

Ideological Form of Resistance: Education and Consciousness-Raising

Paolo Freire, who has worked among peasants in Latin America, has argued in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) that education and consciousness-raising, what he calls "conscientization", is an important element of the oppressed people's liberation process. Conscientization refers to the process by which people become more critically aware and gain deeper understanding of the forces that oppress them. This critical awareness can move them to action to change the oppressive situation. But Paolo Freire emphasized that the

process of critical awareness-building takes place in the context of action-reflection-action, what he calls "praxis", in which people reflect about their experience.

Frantz Fanon (1968) also contends that material conditions of exploitation alone are not enough to move people into action, but that people's deeper understanding and awareness of the situation that oppresses them also play an important role in their resistance. This is further supported by James Scott in his Weapons of the Weak (1985), in which he finds that the informal resistance of the peasants he studied also include "ideological resistance" (p.304). By this he means that they do not only respond to objective conditions of their experience but also to the "normative understandings" and interpretations they have about these conditions (p.305). Scott, however, emphasized the intrinsic interaction between material conditions and ideational interpretaions, that the peasants' views (though varying) are not exogenous to their experience of the material conditions of their everyday lives.

In the previous sections I focused mainly on KAMMI's forms of resistance directed at or responding mainly to the material conditions of their poverty and exploitation. But my examination of KAMMI's politics also include "ideological resistance". One form of "ideological resistance" in KAMMI's politics is education and consciousness-raising. In the following I talk about how KAMMI integrates education and

consciousness-raising in its politics and in what ways it becomes a resistance to the politics of underdevelopment.

I have mentioned in chapter 4 that repression is also ideological. It involves not only military violence directed against political action for change of existing power relations, but also the repression of ideas and awareness of what is happening and an adequate understanding of why they are happening. It involves as well the distortion of facts and propagation of justifications of the existing order. The politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines is partly maintained by ideological justifications of the nature of development that the state legitimizes. By integrating collective education and consciousness-raising, KAMMI counteracts this ideological repression. Education and consciousness-raising in the context of KAMMI's politics basically means arriving at a critical understanding of the situation of peasant women in relation to the general situation of the Filipino peasantry.

The BOS. One of the ways by which KAMMI makes education and consciousness-raising an integral part of its organizational politics is by requiring new members or any beginning local/village chapter to undergo a Basic Orientation Seminar (referred to by the peasant women as "BOS") at the initial stages of their involvement with the organization. Geared to newcomers in the organization, the BOS provides a general overview on the situation of the peasantry as a whole,

the particular situation of the peasant women, and the goals and program of KAMMI. My document analysis of KAMMI's BOS curriculum shows that the Basic Orientation Seminar normally consists of 4 major topics: 1) general situation of the Filipino peasantry as a whole; 2) particular situation of peasant women in the economic, political, cultural, and family spheres; 3) overview of KAMMI -- what is KAMMI, its goals and programs, and how one can become its member.

The topic on the general situation of the peasantry brings out agrarian problems that are experienced by both peasant men and women. These are: a) concentration of land among a few landlords resulting to landlessness/inadequate land among the peasantry and lack of peasant control of their produce, b) usury, c) high land rent for landless peasants, d) control of traders/trader-usurers on the peasants produce such as pricing, e) control of foreign agribusiness corporations in agricultural production, f) low wage of increasing number of landless agricultural workers and their political constraints in organizing. Of these problems, land is identified as the major problem of the Filipino peasantry, but all these problems are viewed as the causes of poverty among the peasantry.

While the topic on the general situation of the peasantry still makes the contribution of the peasant women in agricultural production invisible and the concept of peasantry has a genderless face, in the topic on the particular

situation of the peasant women, the BOS curriculum highlights the following issues about the place of women in the economy: a) the significant contribution of the peasant women in production, making it visible, b) the wage differential between men and women agricultural workers, with women receiving less than men, c) the impact of modern farm technology on women's work, like the increase of weed-growth from the introduction of the HYV (foreign rice hybrid) making weeding (primarily done by women) more difficult, and the displacement of female labor with the introduction of the thresher, d) contribution of the women in the economy of the family by combining child care and household-based income-generating work, which in some cases supply cheap contractual labor to garment factories, e) absence of peasant women's rights corresponding to their significant role in the economy and in the family -- like, the titling of lands only in the name of the husbands, lack of peasant women's tenancy rights independent from their husbands, and the non-participation of peasant women in farm-work-related decisions.

The BOS curriculum, however, does not only view peasant women as performing economic roles in the economy and in the family, but also their place in politics, stressing the silenced position of the peasant women in decision-making bodies of the state, from the village to the national level. It presents peasant women as victims of military repression and violence, and sole bearers of the consequences of military

harassment directed at their husbands.

Other women's issues raised in the BOS curriculum, touching on the social/cultural are: a) lack of access to education of men and women as a result of poverty, but under limited resources men receive preferrential status in the family when deciding who should get higher education beyond the primary and elementary level, b) the ideological definition of women's place as primarily in the home deprives women of other opportunities, c) the impact of inadequate medical and health services in the village on the reproductive and general health of the women, such as the absence of medical care during pregnancy and childbirth, d) patriarchal relations in the family and the sexual division of labor, with women doing most of domestic work in addition to farm work, e) the lack of society's recognition that peasant women's domestic work is also productive work, and f) the limited nature of church activities that most women engage in since they do not politicize them towards changing their social conditions.

With this overview of the particular situation of the peasant women during the BOS, KAMMI, thus contributes to a broader understanding of the peasantry in the Philippines by calling attention to the particularity in the experience of peasant women, which is usually not reflected in the way KMP (open to both peasant men and women but largely dominated by peasant male leadership) publically articulates its

explanations of the problems of the peasantry.

However, this analysis of the peasant women's situation in this BOS curriculum is quite too general to suit the particular local and personal experiences of the peasant women. For example, Ate Ara, an experienced peasant woman organizer and also a provincial leader of KAMMI, observes the need to begin from the particular experiences of the peasant women to whom the BOS is given. During one of our informal conversations she criticized the way Cristina, who during the time of fieldwork would usually provide the analysis of the women's situation during the BOS :

> In giving BOS, if you start this way, "The situation of women is this, their wage is lower than men" - huh, that's old music. You must fit your lecture to the situation of peasants. For example, you, do you own the land you till? What do you do in the fields? In what ways are you being controlled?

Some peasant women leaders who have been in the movement for many years, (like Ate Gansa, Ate Lorena, Ate Morina and Ate Delita), find the BOS as "lacking in depth" ("hindi malalim") or just touching the surface ("pahapyaw"). These women have been exposed to other political groups in Mindoro even before they became involved in organizing KAMMI. However, for others who are just beginning to be politically involved, the BOS is the start of a new consciousness about women's rights and their place in society. Ate Celita, for example, says: "When I went to the BOS my husband did not give me permission. But I learned in the BOS that women's rights must be struggled for". This new consciousness may grow as

peasant women become more and more involved politically. That there are different levels of awareness and political consciousness among the members of KAMMI indicates that political consciousness is a process and is not static. And the BOS may be the beginning of a new awareness for some.

After this analysis of the general situation of the peasantry and the particular situation of the peasant women, KAMMI's BOS curriculum stresses the importance of the role of women's organization in bringing about change in their lives and in the community. It points out that one of the causes of the persistence of the poverty in the community and in the nation and the particular hardship of the peasant women is lack of unity and organized efforts of the people, that people's organizations have an important role in bringing about social change and progress.

Organization ("Samahan") is conceived as "a group of 10 or more people with similar aspirations or needs, with readiness and capacity to do cooperative work towards the achievement of a goal for the benefit of the majority of the members of the group". Hence, early in their organization involvement, new members are introduced into the idea of "organization" as people doing things together for the good of the majority of the members, not just for one or few individuals in the group.

The BOS curriculum distinguishes two kinds of peasant organization -- "samahan <u>para</u> sa magbubukid" (organization

for the peasants) and "samahan ng mga magbubukid" (organization of the peasants). "Organization for the peasants" is defined as one that is organized from the top by some agencies not so much for the interest of peasants but rather for the interest of the agency, while "organization of peasants" is an organization organized by the peasants themselves with leadership and membership coming from the peasantry itself, truly serving the interest of the peasants, and its goals and principles defined by the peasants themselves. The BOS stresses that KAMMI is an "organization of peasant women" oriented towards the interest of peasant women.

The BOS curriculum concludes with an overview of KAMMI, its general goals, its link with AMIHAN, and its organizational structure. It emphasized that KAMMI aims at unifying peasant women and women agricultural workers, raising their political consciousness, making the organization a means towards changing society and at spreading the importance of education, collective action and alliance with other sectors towards the kind of change peasant women expect to happen. Hence, in this overview KAMMI is presented as a local peasant women's organization but one that also looks beyond itself, that it is part of the broader movement for change in the Philippines.

At the time of my fieldwork, the presentation of the topics in the BOS was usually done by some professionals

supportive of KAMMI (from now on to be referred to as SP or support professionals). Although, there were two peasant women provincial leaders whom I talked to who considered themselves as "instructors" for the BOS, their full participation did not appear to be a normal procedure in conducting the BOS in different village chapters. The role peasant women provincial leaders played was mostly doing the legwork to bring peasant women together in their area and SP would conduct the BOS there. Although there were peasant women leaders, such as Ate Gansa, who considered themselves knowledgeable about the BOS curriculum, saying that their knowledge is even "more profound" ("mas malalim") than what is presented in the BOS, they were not fully involved in the presentation of these ideas. There are peasant women leaders of KAMMI, like Ate Norita, Ate Sarisa, Ate Liwa, who feel that they are already capable of conducting BOS, planning the curriculum themselves, dividing among themselves who should do what, and think that they know more the situation and needs of the people in their own area, but they feel they are just doing marginal roles in conducting the BOS. Ate Sarisa succinctly articulates this:

> We can already do the lecturing. We can already prepare a syllabus. The three of us are capable of deciding which tasks and what topics each of us can handle. We can be the ones to conduct the seminars without being dependent on (SP), because we have already gone through these seminars ourselves. We know more the situation, happenings, and needs in our own locality. In the training that was conducted in our place, what role was assigned to us? Look, I was only a prayer leader there.

This indicates that in the process of ideological resistance peasant women are aware that they too are producers and articulators of knowledge, that while they may not have a higher education, they feel that they are also capable of explaining their own situation, and play the role of speakers. If ideological resistance is directed at ideas, and ideas is the object of production and the commodity for exchange, then the peasant women are claiming a central role in such process, not just consumers of ideas delivered from the top or by women outside their class. As peasant women, they too can be spokespersons of their own situation. They know that they know something. For example, I often heard Ate Ara said: "Even if I have no education ("wala akong pinag-aralan"), I know more about organizing than they do" [referring here to SP]. Ate Ara claims that her knowledge is from experience, and that is "knowing more". Rightly so. Here then, is a rationale for beginning from the experience of poor women in the production of knowledge about women and development, or women in the politics of change. This idea is, in fact, emphasized by Sen and Grown: "The perspective of poor oppressed women provides a unique and powerful vantage point from which we can examine the effects of development programs and strategies" (Sen and Grown 1987, 23). This has implications not only on state-sponsored development institutions but also on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that serve as support institutions for peasant women's struggles.

The peasant women's criticisms about the way the BOS is conducted, although these were not said in front of PS but in their everyday conversations, is an important component of their ideological resistance, other than the increased knowledge and understandings they may acquire from it. It is a call for greater recognition of their experience and affirmation of their self-definitions in the education and consciousness-raising processes -- which is actually KAMMI's forum of ideas and a mode of knowledge production and understanding of their own immediate situation and the broader social situation.

Leadership training. Another significant aspect of KAMMI's education and organization work is leadership training. On June 13-15 KAMMI held a leadership training seminar for 17 leaders from its different local village chapters. The seminar, in which I was lucky to be a participant observer, was held in San Jose, the more urbanized area of Mindoro. The women came to this meeting because generally they wanted "to learn more about what it means to be a leader", "how to be a good leader", "to learn more about methods of leadership", and "to understand more about how to become a leader of a community". These reasons indicate that the women were aware of their leadership role in KAMMI and seriously accept that role that they were even willing to learn more about how to better perform in this role. They perceive themselves as leaders because the local

chapters where they belong chose them as leaders:"We had an election, I was chosen to be the chairman". Election was the process by which the leadership positions of these women were legitimated.

Contrary to the popular notion that village peasant women have little interest in ideas, I have observed that these peasant women leaders were very interested to learn from this seminar. Some of them came with their young children to stay away from their families for 3 days to be in this leadesrhip seminar. Some of them came from far away villages, others had to cross rivers on a banca because it so happened that at that time the waters in the rivers were high because of the rain the previous night. There are rivers in Mindoro that jeepneys can cross on good weather when the waters are not high, and the women would prefer this because the fare is cheaper than the banca fare. Even under very limited resources the peasant women spent money to come to this training.

The expenses for this seminar was partly funded by SP, but the peasant women had to put up a counter part by shouldering part of the meals during the days of the seminar. SP provided the meals of the first couple of days. The latter days were provided by the peasant women. Some of the peasant women commented that "when the meals are provided by SP during seminars they are usually delicious ("masarap"), but when it is their "turn to provide the meals it is usually just dried fish ("tuyo") because that is the only one they could afford.

their needs give not only resources but also sacrifice. And this is what I have observed from the poor peasant women. Yet, peasant women's leadership in the broader women's movement in the Philippines as well as in the whole movement of the peasantry is still largely invisible. Village peasant women still remain unsung heroines in the literature on the women's movement in the Philippines. Western feminists who go to the Philippines to learn about the women's movement usually would talk to middle-class women in Manila whose names have become popular. In fact while I was in Manila, a film was being made by a British feminist about the life of a leader of GABRIELA (the national coalition of women's organizations in the Philippines) which claims that its mass base is among the peasant women and women workers. Just as in the U.S. there was a struggle among poor black women to call the attention of white feminists, who became spokespersons for the women's movement, to the issue of gender, race and class (Davis 1981), in the Philippines the women's movement as a whole still needs to grapple with the issue of gender and class within the movement as well as in the larger social structures.

This leadership training seminar consisted of the following themes which were discussed in the order I state here: 1) sharing of the peasant women's experiences, 2) analysis of the current national situation in the Philippines, 3) historical overview of the women's movement in the Philippines, 4) principles of social analysis, 5) leadership -

- concept, roles and styles, and 6) principles of organizing. In discussing these themes I will highlight only the first four themes since I have already touched on the principles of organization earlier in this chapter. I will focus my analysis on the views and experiences the peasant women articulated in this seminar.

Sharing of experiences. The seminar began with a sharing of the peasant women's experiences as leaders in their respective areas. Mira facilitated the sharing. The sharing of experiences among peasant women leaders, especially when they come from different local chapters, become an important part of their coming together. They do not only learn from each other's experiences but also it gives them a sense of connectedness, a sense that their local chapter is not alone in the struggle. During their sharing of experiences in this leadership training, one of the issues that I have observed had excited the whole group was when Ate Juanita began talking about her difficulties in organizing the peasant women. She said that her problem is the barrio captain (highest local government official in Philippine village) in her village: "My problem is the captain ("kapitan"), he does not want his power challenged. He is reluctant to give us permit to hold seminars. He says to the people that our women's organization is an NPA organization". Ate Lowe added that women's organizations threaten those in power: "The captain thinks that if the peasant women become progressive his power will

be lessened". And Ate Laya who organizes in another village re-affirmed the normal way of getting permit to hold meetings: "It is really like that, we have to go through the captain first in getting permit".

Others shared the difficulties they experience as leaders in organizing under militarization, their experience with the military or paramilitary forces (the CAFGUs). For example, Ate Lorena shared how the presence of the CAFGUS affected the leadership in her local chapter:

> Our problem is that the CAFGUs are already there, they have put our organization apart. 1986 was the start of our organization. I am the only one left behind. The other leaders went into hiding, they went to other places. Some leaders were arrested and they were killed. My brother was also arrested by the military; they did not kill him, but they tortured him. They asked so many questions. Why do we come to (SP), why do we join KMP. The suspicion about us is that half of our family is already members of the NPA. They bombed our village. Then we had to leave. In fact, there was again another military operation there in our village. The military ambushed some people, they are in the funeral parlor ("funeraria"). Militatrization is a big obstacle to our action.
>
> Before we already had an organization, but it fell apart because of militarization. Those of us left behind started again another organization.

Ate Laya expressed that she had a similar experience:

> What they have experienced, I have also experienced. The military asked me so many questions. Why am I at (SP) when I am also working in the church? Why are you with (SP), are they not NPA? I answered them, if they are NPA then why are they not in the mountains? They asked me, what are you teaching there? I answered them, why are you so meddlesome ("makulit")? The way to answer their questions is to answer them straight.

In these verbal exchanges, the leaders were actually expressing their own concept of power as they experience it

in the immediate context of their action. Local state power from their experience is negative, it is an obstacle to their own collective empowerment, but one which they see is not insurmountable. By creating an opportunity for the leaders to come together to share and talk about their experiences and difficluties, they are able to have a sense of the problems thay experience similarly. And this is important in developing a collective sense or feeling among the local chapters, that binds them together as one force, not only as separate isolated units. This is one of the sources of their strength and empowerment. Thus, Ate Laya continues: "We cannot do any action ("hindi tayo makakagalaw") here if we do not have a federation".

In the sharing of experiences, the leaders also get a sense of the potential for growth of their federation or how the idea of a peasant women's organization is being received by potential members. Ate Laya excitedly talk about the interest she observed in the other women in her area about attending the BOS: "I have talked to other women who also like to have the BOS, but they have not been given a seminar. They are looking for this kind of seminar, the BOS". Leaders also learn from the organizing strategies of other leaders. Ate Sarisa who is new leader and is just setting up a village chapter in her area shared: "We were able to organize our chapter in the village. Since we did not have a voice in our village government ("barangay"), we thought of setting up

together a day care center, as a beginning project. The members are already willing to contribute to the project". These sharing indicated that in the context of militarization, even at the risk of their lives, peasant women find creative ways to bond together. If one of the tactics of repression is divide and rule, then these peasant women are resisting that from below. Their sharing is their source of strength and breaks the isolation that repression wants to breed. It is in the sense of being in community with others that one finds strength in the struggle.

Wanting to know if the peasant women experience tension in their family life with their political involvements, Mira, the facilitator asked the question: "Do you experience problems with your family as you get more involved in the community?" Only Ate Lorena responded. As someone not only active in KAMMI, but also involved in her church, family and work, Ate Lorena shared that she has found a way to manage her time so that she is able to do all of them. She sets a time for all her involvement and tells others that those times are for certain things so that they would know what to expect and when to expect that from her. When I stayed with Ate Lorena I have observed that her day was always full. There was no time when she had nothing to do. Hence, being a leader also means being able to manage one's time, and that means always being busy. For some women, I have observed, it means combining child care and attending meetings: many of the women

who have young children bring their babies or children to these meetings, just as they would bring them to the farm when no one else can take care of them. Hence, their political organizational involvement is not something that they do only when they have a spare time, it is part of their everyday lives. This modifies Scott's (1985) and Kerkvliet's (1990) concept of "everyday politics" as unorganized resistance, and organized resistance as something of the extra-ordinary.

Analysis of Philippine national situation. After the sharing of the peasant women's experiences, an analysis of the national situation in the Philippines followed. An analysis of the national situation in the Philippines is usually a major component of leadership training. It provides a context in which a collective discussion of issues can take place. This part was facilitated by Carlos. A peasant woman national leader of AMIHAN, Ate Gloria, who accompanied me in coming to Mindoro at the time when this leadership training was held, also joined the deliberations.

Carlos began his presentation by asking the peasant women what they would like to talk about first, "the political or economic situation". Ate Lorena responded, "Economic". In an attempt to make the concept of "economic" and "political" situation more concrete to the peasant women, Carlos commented: "The issue closest to the stomach is the economic situation. The issue closest to the mind is the political situation". Ate Lorena, however, who does not see such

dichotomy between the economic and the political, argued: "If you have no stomach you have no mind". Carlos, anyhow, continued: "The issue closest to the stomach is the increase in prices of all goods, for example the price of rice". By bringing up the issue of rice price-hike, Carlos touched something that was close to the everyday life of the peasant women -- rice is the resource to which the peasant women relate as producers and consumers. Carlos related the issue of price increase to the consequences of the IMF and the World Bank development policies: "The increase in prices is the result of the conditions the IMF and the World Bank have placed on the Philippine government so it could borrow more money. This is contained in the Letter of Intent (LOI). These conditions include a) import liberalization -- free entry of goods to the Philippines with low or no tax, b) increase in the Value Added Tax (VAT), c) Devaluation -- the value of the peso has decreased from 14 pesos to a dollar under Marcos to 21 pesos to a dollar under Aquino". Ate Gloria, an AMIHAN national peasant woman leader interjected a concrete illustration of the concept of devaluation of the peso: "With one thousand dollars, Americans can already buy so much rice, but with one thousand pesos we can only buy very little". Carlos continued and put the blame on President Aquino: "Cory said that she would change this, but she did not change it. What she is doing is just perpetuating what Marcos did". Ate Lorena affirmed this but added that their suffering

has gotten worse: "During Marcos time we were already having a hard time, now with Aquino we are even suffering more. Now the price of soap is P11.50, before it was P9.50". Ate Gloria brought up the impact of inflation on them as women: "The effect of this is much more on us women". Without picking up Ate Gloria's comment, Carlos came in with objective facts on the Philippine national budget: "Let us examine the national budget. Let us analyze the national budget. Let us look at these figures: (Figures were written on a big Manila paper). National Budget for 1988 = P172 billion, Social Services (20.6%) = P35.45 billion, Economic Services (20.3% = P34.936 billion, Foreign Debt Payment (40.2%) = P69.184 billion, Others (18.9%) = P32.526 billion". Ate Lorena who has witnessed the military bombings in her village added a category that was not reflected in the statistical facts Carlos presented: "The government expenses in firing guns also comes from us." Carlos continued his presentation of objective facts, this time touching on the foreign debt and budget deficit in the Philippine public treasury:

> Let us look at the data on the budget deficit:
> 1986 = P25 billion
> mid-1987 = P23.48 billion
> 1988 + P22 billion -- based on the approximate government expenses of P172 billion with an estimated income of P150 billion.
> budget for the military = 6.6% of the national budget in 1987 -- increase of 12.1% of the 1986 budget.

Carlos pointed out that it is the Filipino people who are paying for the government's debt, that its increasing foreign

debt is a result of a dependent Philippine economy, an economy that is export-oriented and import-dependent. Ate Gloria added by pointing out the relationship between foreign debt and increase in prices: "If we are going to analyze it critically, the 40% that we pay for the national debt, we are actually the ones paying for it through the increase of prices. We are the ones who are buying the goods." Ate Sarisa even further saw the subtle connection between debt servicing and the consumer market:"We pay for the debt indirectly when we buy goods". Ate Lorena added that they also pay for it through the increase in some form of government taxes: "Just take for example the pay for residence tax. Before we pay 3 pesos, then 6 pesos, now we pay 10 pesos". Ate Lecia saw unfairness of this: "We do not even yet have a job, and we are paying for this debt". Ate Lorena who is also active in her church further observed that "even the fee for baptism has also been increased".

At this point Carlos gave an explanation of why there is increase in prices. His explanation was critical of the law of supply and demand that traditional economists would often refer to in explaining price fluctuation. He emphasized the connection between increase in prices and the debt trap the Philippine economy is in: "Prices of goods increase not because of natural effects of supply and demand, that when there is more demand and there is little supply the prices go up. This is not the real reason for the increase of prices,

but that it is the imposition of the IMF and the World Bank. We are borrowing money in order to pay for what we borrowed". Furthermore, Carlos explained the source of Philippine budget deficit in the international division of labor within market capitalism and expansionism: "Why do we have a budget deficit? The reasons are the following. First, because as an agricultural country we specialize in producing raw materials, like sugar, bananas, pineapple, coconut, fruits, corn, abaca, tobacco. The First World, which are the rich nations, want us to specialize in these raw products and they will take care of other finished goods. We are made simply to feed the world, creators ("tagapaglikha") of the food for the world ("pagkain ng mundo"). We are also just made into simply as suppliers of raw materials, for example raw materials that we find in Mindoro -- chromite, greenstone, blackstone, copper, iron, nickel. Secondly, the reason why we have a budget deficit is because we are made simply as a market of the manufactured goods of the rich nations. Since they have a surplus of goods in their nations, they must export these goods, otherwise that becomes only an idle capital". Cristina joined in, explaining what Carlos said in more concrete terms: "We buy these manufactured, finished goods in much more expensive prices. Already included in the price is the labor and other materials needed to manufacture the products". Carlos continued, touching on the core-periphery economic relations in the global political economy: "That is why this

is what the First World ("mga maunlad na bansa") want, that we remain in this situation." This deliberation provoked Ate Lorena to ask a practical question: "What are we going to do?" Ate Gloria responded with an appeal to economic self-reliance: "We must be the one to make other products from the raw materials that we have." Carlos offered "alternative education" ("alternatibong edukasyon") and "organization" as steps towards change. Bella elaborated: "By alternative education we mean the kind of education that we can make use of". Ate Gloria, a national AMIHAN leader also brought out the importance of organization: "We will not be able to liberate ourselves ("hindi tayo lalaya") if we are not organized". Carlos continued relating organization to consciousness-raising and demands for agrarian reforms: "Strength of unity ("lakas ng pagkakaisa") of Filipinos is what we need. We need organization that will change the minds of the different sectors. The organization must demand genuine agrarian reform. Like what are the problems of peasants"? Ate Lorena immediately answered: "No land". "No land to till -- that is the root of our poverty. Ninety percent of the population is poor", Carlos affirmed.

However, Ate Gloria, who sees the complexity of the peasants' problems, raised the question: "If we will have a true agrarian reform, can we say that we are already liberated ("malaya")?" Ate Juanita was quick to see this complexity: "No, we would still have so many problems, like medicines".

Carlos seeing the same complexity brought up the concept of integrated development, like combining agrarian reforms alongside with national industrialization: "The second solution is national industrialization. We may have land, but if we still import pesticides, fertilizers, we are still not yet truly free. The HYV (foreign hybrid of palay) that peasants produce is a result of the control of multinational corporations of our economy. Sometimes the seeds are being contracted with the multinational corporations. The seeds of unmilled rice ("butil ng palay") will become truly FIlipino if genuine land reform is implemented along side with national industrialization".

But Carlos did not point out the woman question in these development issues. It became again the task of Ate Gloria to bring up the woman question in agrarian and political reforms which will not be automatically addressed unless specifically paid attention to: "Land reform is just one step towards the solutions to these problems. There might still be the discrimination against women. We must be recognized as a force in agricultural production, and that we have a right to own land. We must have a voice not only at home but also in the nation ("bayan")". Ate Sarisa also articulated the invisibility of peasant women: "We are not yet visible ("Hindi pa tayo nakikita"). We are still being looked down because we are women. We are still expected to take care of men." Carlos at this time attempted to support the women's

concerns and said: "The men are able to work in the fields because they are freed from housework, that is why the contribution of women must be recognized". Ate Gloria expanded his view touching on the invisibility and non-recognition of peasant women's work: "We must be recognized not only by the men, but by the whole society. We, as women, are being used by landlords without pay". Others brought out the traditional concept of peasant as only "male" although they (the peasant women) also work in the landlord's farm. Ate Lorena said: "When your husband dies, you also do not get support from the landlord to work on the land. Even among landlords, it is seldom that it is the woman who manages the land". Ate Gloria cited an example to Ate Lorena's claim: "We already have an experience with a case in Isabela. When her husband died, the landlord did not allow her to till the land because according to him she was not capable of managing it. That is why we must fight for that". Ate Lorena affirmed this with her experienced with her landlord: "I was told by our landlord that I have no right to meddle ("wala daw akong pakialam") because he is going to get the land that we are tilling". Ate Juanita also expressed her sense of the invisibility of peasant women without identity separate from her husband:"When our husband dies, we are considered nothing ("bali wala na kaming kuwenta")". Ate Laya even further thinks of the lack of recognition of peasant women as a whole: "Even if you are a woman without a husband, you are also

nothing".

At this point, Carlos took the chance to move the discussion to the next issue in his agenda. He presented statistical information on the level of poverty in the Philippines, handwritten on a big Manila paper, which he culled out from government documents:

> Let us look at these figures on Poverty Line --
> 1983 - 45% of the whole population was under poverty line
> 1985 - 65% of the whole population was under poverty line
> 1989 - 85% of the whole population was under poverty line
> 1989 - P160/day was the needed average income for a family of 6 in Manila; P100/day for a family of 6 in the rural areas.

Carlos explained the concept of "poverty line" in a way that the peasant women would understand: "Families living on poverty line means that they are able to buy new clothes only once a year, have only three meals a day, and are able to send their children only until high school. It is not included here other essential needs, like a house. Below poverty line means that the family sometimes have only brunch, only one meal a day, sometimes just coffee". Ate Lorena added her own concept of "poverty line": "It means therefore that out of 100 people, 85 are hungry ("gutom"), only 15 are filled ("busog"). Ate Lalay also brought in her own experience of poverty: "What we earn is not even enough". Cristina tried to relate the impact of poverty to the role of women in the family as additional income-generator for basic needs that inadequate farm income does not meet: "Peasants earn only one thousand pesos. The two

thousand pesos that needs to be put up is the responsibility of the woman by looking for other means of income". Ate Laya affirmed this: "The responsibility placed on the women is greater". And Ate Sarisa agreed touching on the sexual division of labor in meeting family needs: "That's right, the men think only of the fields ("bukid").

Carlos moved the discussion to an analysis of the political situation, focusing on the human rights violations under the Aquino government. He presented statistical data on the human rights violations in the Philippines in the early period of the Aquino regime in comparison with the later part of the Marcos reign:

> Let us discuss the political situation. Let us look at the human rights situation. Let us see these figures -
>
> 1. Number of arrests: Marcos time - 1984 = 6,000+
> Aquino time - 1987 = 7,444
>
> 2. Ratio of disappearance to arrest:
> 1985 = 1 disappearance out of 24 arrests
> Dec. 1986 = 1 disappearance out of 14 arrests
> 1987 = 1 disppearance out of 29 arrests
>
> 3. Ratio of salvaging (extra-judicial execution) to arrests:
> 1985 = 1:73
> Dec. 1986 = 1:6
> 1987 = 1:8
>
> 4. Violation of human rights
> Number of illegal arrests = 6,200
> Number of Missing = 700 (102 are confirmed killed)
> Number of massacre = 36 (138 people died)
> Number of families affected by evacuations = 20,000 families evacuated because of military operations, bombings, razing, and terrorism of vigilantes (particularly Cagayan Valley, Negros, North Mindanao,

and others).

From these statistics, Carlos concluded that there is an intensification of militarization in the Philippines even with the toppling of Marcos. He asked: "Why is militarization intensifying?" Ate Gloria expressed her view on the connection between the interest of the landlords to protect their land and the spread of paramilitary troops in the villages: "The vigilantes is also one instrument of militarization. The vigilantes spread when the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) of the Aquino government was approved. That is why the vigilantes is a protection for the landlords. It is the landlords who have control over the vigilantes." Ate Sarisa mentioned "Almeda is one example" of this kind of landlord who makes use of the paramilitary troops to protect his land. Cristina brought in the idea that the present militarization in the Philippines is now on the level of "total war policy" in which the U.S. government is involved: "This thing they call "total war policy", in this policy the government will use some social approach, that is they will use some of the social program of the government in winning the people. This is what they call WHAM (winning the hearts and minds of the people). It is the United States that gave this policy to us. We will be the one to fight each other, while the U.S. supplies the arms". Carlos pointed out the lessening of the middle-road in political action in the politics of militarization: "The danger here is that there is

no opening for us to be neutral. For the government, if you do not support the military or vigilantes, you are for the left. Here in Mindoro, militarization is also widespread, the vigilantes have also spread". Ate Lorena, on the other hand, brought out the impact of militarization on the peasant women's work: "Because of militarization, working in the farm has become more difficult for us". Carlos continued pointing out that militarization is a way for the Aquino government to legitimize its government: "To consolidate her government, Aquino wants that the military will unite and that everyone should support the government". Ate Gloria, however, argued that there are factions in the government and they will be vying for power during the next presidential election in 1992: "But now we can see that there are factions in the government. For example, in the coming elections, we must have a deep critical analysis. That is why we must be prepared". Carlos went on to cite the financial burden of the elections on the people: "The expenses for the election, we will be the ones to pay for it". Ate Gloria ended the deliberation appealing to having critical consciousness as their only weapon against being deceived by government leaders: "Our weapon is our vision, a critical thinking ("malinaw na pag-iisip") in all these happenings". Ate Laya affirmed: "Let us open our eyes".

In this deliberations on the national situation two patterns can be observed. First, that there was no attempt on the part of Carlos, who was acting the role of facilitator,

to incorporate the woman question in presenting his analysis of the national situation in the Philippines despite the fact that he was talking to peasant women. Carlos' style of presentation is typical of male activists in the Philippines who are involved in the open mass movement for national liberation in the Philippines. There is still the prevalent thinking that the woman question in development issues is not a national issue, that that is a turf specific to women, or that bringing up the gender question in analysis will divide the national liberation movement whose goal is to consolidate and unify all forces from different sectors and classes. Second, another pattern observable in this deliberation, is that it was the peasant women who would always attempt to bring in the woman side in the discussion of the national issues. Ate Gloria, an AMIHAN peasant woman national leader who happened to be in this training only because she accompanied me to Mindoro, was particularly assertive in bringing in the woman question in the analysis of Philippine national situation. And the peasant women of KAMMI were particularly assertive in bringing down the national analysis to their concrete experience. This dynamics raises three issues -- a) that consciousness-raising is not a one-way process, that peasant women have an important contribution to make in the analysis of national issues, b) that analysts of Philippine national situation have something to learn from the experience of peasant women, and c) that asserting the woman

question in national analysis of Philippine situation is part of the peasant women's politics of resistance within the peasant movement as well as within the national liberation movement in the Philippines. Cynthia Enloe (1989) recognizes the struggles of women activists in the Third World, such as the Philippines, in bringing in the woman question in the politics of national liberation movements, since there is still the dominant thinking within national liberation movements that the woman question is to be addressed only after national liberation is attained from the vestiges of neo-colonialism. The assertiveness that the peasant women showed in bringing in the woman question in this part of the seminar is just one indicator of the women's struggle within the struggle. Part of the silencing of women both in the politics of underdevelopment and within the liberation movement is to silence their own interpretation and analysis of national issues in which they bring in their woman's perspective into it. This silencing is part of the ways of perpetuating a world system that is maintained by the exploitation of women's productive and reproductive work. Thus, it is worth considering what Enloe says: "It is worth imagining, therefore, what would happen to international politics if more nationalist movements were informed by women's experiences of oppression" (1989:64).

History of the women's movement in the Philippines. The presentation of this topic was facilitated by Cristina.

Cristina presented two themes: the impact of colonization on the status of Filipino women and the evolution of the women's organizations in the Philippines and the role women played in them.

Cristina presented Western colonialism as the harbingger of patriarchial ideologies into Philippine culture:

> Before the Spanish colonizers came, we had a primitive communal way of living. Private ownership was not the norm. Women relatively had an equal status with men. Women were consulted in decsision-making in the community. When the Spanish colonizers came, there was a change in our social order. Here came the patriarchal culture -- the idea that the father or the husband is the head of the family. The woman was expected to be a martyr.

Cristina's view represents one of the perspectives on the history of women's oppression in the Philippines. One view, a nationalist feminist view, which Cristina takes, puts emphasis on the assumption that Filipino women's oppression began with their loss of pre-colonial relative equality under the colonial conquest of the Philippines, during which patriarchal ideologies about women got diffused into Philippine culture alongside a material change in the social order. Present articulation of gender and class has roots in the colonial and neo-colonial history of the Philippines. A second view emphasizes the sexual division of labor that pre-existed even before colonial conquest of the Philippines as the seed of gender inequality that further germinated in the colonial and post-colonial periods, but lacks an analytical connection between productive and reproductive work of women.

A third view emphasizes the connection between production and reproduction in the subordination and exploitation of women and that the experience of women of the nature of such exploitation will differ depending on their class position. All these perspectives reflect an attempt to reconceptualize the Filipino woman/women given the historical matrix of her/their exploitation, oppression, and subordination. Filipino women activists who try to link feminist politics to the national liberation in the Philippines tend to follow the nationalist feminist perspective. AMIHAN's documents also indicate that it follows a nationalist feminist perspective, hence, this is also filtered down to KAMMI. This nationalist feminist perspective finds support in Cheryl Johnson's study of Yoruba women in which she takes the view that "the solution to the problem of women's general lack of political and economic power in Africa is not just a question of the position of women vis-a-vis men in their respective societies, but also a question of the position of the societies in which women find themselves vis-a-vis their former colonizers" (Johnson 1986, 237). Within the nationalist feminist perspective the same can be said of Filipino women, especially peasant and working class women.

There was an attempt in this deliberation to situate the emergence of AMIHAN and KAMMI in the history of the women's movement in the Philippines, that the emergence of the women's organizations in the Philippines is not just happening now.

Their coming together has a historical precedence. Cristina, for example, traced the evolution of the major thrusts of Filipino women's organizations way back in the 1800:

> In 1890 upper class women in the Philippines began to organize. By 1893 Logia de Adopcion was organized under the leadership of Teresa Tecson, who was then fighting against the Spanish colonial rule. In 1896 the Filipino people revolted against the Spanish colonial government. The women were involved in the revolution. Gabriela Silang was one of the women revolutionary leaders against Spanish domination. In 1899 Asosasyon de Damas de la Cruz Rojas was set up more for humanitarian purposes. Its work was similar to that of the Red Cross. The major nature of its work was to provide emergency help to victims of calamities. In 1902 the Philippine Women's League of Peace (La Liga Filipina) was formed under the leadership of Carmen Poblete. The nature of their work, however, was directed towards helping the American government suppress dissent.

The peasant women expressed awareness of Cristina's presentation. Ate Gloria emphasized the historical precedence of the present women's struggles: "Even before there was already a struggle of the women, it is not only now that they are emerging". Ate Laya affirmed: "Before there were already women's organizations, it is not only this time that it is beginning". Ate Gloria, however, brought up the connection between the nature of some of the women's organization and colonial mentality: "Before there was no direction towards the liberation of women. They thought that the American colonizers were friends of the Filipino people".

Cristina continued tracing the evolution of women's organizations in the Philippines, this time from 1900 to the present, and situated historically the emergence of AMIHAN

and KAMMI:

> By 1905 Association Feminista Filipina was born. Its major work was directed at demanding reforms in labor laws, land reform, and defense of the rights of women prisoners. They demanded educational reforms, changes in the workplace and other national social problems. In 1906 Association Feminista Ilonga was organized and they were the first to put forth the issue of women suffrage. Then in the 1960's the MAKIBABA (Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan) was founded. It saw the problems of Filipino women within the context of the national problems and issues in the Philippines. This went underground after its members were harassed during the Marcos military regime. In 1984 GABRIELA got organized, followed by the organization of AMIHAN in 1986, and KAMMI formally became a chapter of AMIHAN in 1987. GABRIELA is an alliance of all women's organizations in the Philippines, it is a national federation of women's organization all over the country. It includes all women's organizations from the different sectors -- peasant women, students and youth, church women, urban poor women, professional women, women workers. They are members of GABRIELA if they carry the issues of the Federation. AMIHAN is the national federation or alliance of peasant women's organizations in the Philippines. KAMMI is a local chapter of AMIHAN. Although AMIHAN is federated with GABRIELA, AMIHAN has a distinct structure of its own because it is a sectoral organization of peasant women.

When I asked Cristina how she got to know what she presented here, she said she learned it from one of the sessions of GABRIELA when she attended one of its seminars in Manila. Here we see how ideas in the women's movement get diffused. Ideas, therefore, have a place in the women's movement as in any other movement. Without going into a polemical argument on the Hegelian and Marxist perspective, ideas do have an influence in political action and change. Historical consciousness of one's organized action can provide direction and a sense of continuity, a sense of rootedness in one's action. But this historical consciousness is also a

process that can develop as one gets involved in political action. This is, for instance, indicated by the fact that the peasant women leaders who have been involved in the movement for a longer time have a greater awareness of the historical precedence of the current women's movement in the Philippines than those who were just beginning. The building of this historical consciousness is part of their resistance towards recapturing their nationhood lost by colonial subjugation.

Leadership. Another theme of this leadership training was the concept of leadership, role of leaders, and styles of leadership. This topic was facilitated by Mira. Based on their experience of leadership, the peasant women had a chance to articulate their conceptions about leadership. They think of leadership as undergoing and organizing training for the organization ("pagsasanay"), leading in implementing organizational activities ("pangunguna"), raising critical consciousness in themselves and among the members of the organization ("pagpapalawak ng kaisipan"), facilitates decision-making in the group ("taga-saayos"), and taking lead in getting things done ("pagpapasunod"). Adding to the ideas of the peasant women, Mira presented a theory of leadership ("pamiminunu") that differs from the patronage politics of traditional political leaders in the Philippines: "Pamiminunu" refers to "the methods, ways or style of running or administering an organization towards the goals of the organization not through the use of power or influence of

wealth and fame, but through gaining the respect and trust of the members". "Pamiminunu", Mira further explained, differs from the concept of "pamumuno" which refers to "the ability of a person to lead a group of people including herself towards achieving the goals of the organization". One can be considered a leader ("pinuno"), Mira continues, if one or a group of people "has the knowledge, experience, and correct attitude to the dynamics of leading the organization". Touching on the concept of legitimacy in leadership, Mira explained that a "pinuno" (leader) can be officially part of the formal leadership ("namumuno") if she has been "elected and assigned by the members to a position in order to perform a responsibility".

Without speaking in sophisticated language, the peasant women articulated their own experiential concept of leadership roles that is actually a concretization of Mira's theoretical explanation of leadership. For the peasant women leaders leadership roles include: activating the organization, providing direction towards the efficient concretization and implementation of the organization's goals and program of action, sustaining the interest/persistence/unity of the members, and acting/leading based on the interest of the members not just the interest of an individual or a few in the organization. To accomplish these roles, the peasant women see that leaders must possess certain qualities. They mentioned the following qualities that good leaders must have:

-- trustworthy and loyal ("no one will follow a leader if members do not trust her");
-- leaders should not be the first one to destroy the reputation of their members
-- leaders must give and receive feedback ("magpunahan")
-- leaders must have adequate knowledge ("may sapat na kaalaman")
-- treats others equally ("pantay-pantay na pagtingin sa kapwa") or treats others as her equal
-- a leader is like a mother who must treat her children equally
-- she is understanding ("maunawain")
-- she is responsible
-- has principles ("may paninindigan")
-- is not afraid ("hindi takot", "matapang")
-- she is respected by members because she also respects them

Mira added something that the peasant women did not mention: "A leader must be fair in distributing benefits of the organization by not giving "preferential treatment to relatives". I never heard about the peasant women talk about kinship relations as interfering in their organizational politics and it did not come out either in my informal interviews. However, there are cases of nepotism in the Philippines wherein relatives of some state officials received preferential treatment or acquired wealth and power through kinship connection. For example, relatives and close friends of former President Ferdinand Marcos and Imelda Marcos "all prospered through access to government credits, contracts, and their ability to manipulate government permits required of foreign investors, often becoming Filipino partners in joint ventures or licensing arrangements" (Wurfel 1988:237), and that President Corazon Aquino herself "made no attempt to replace patronage politics" (Wurfel 1988:340). By pointing out

the expectation that public leaders must go beyond kinship in the allocation of organizational resources, Mira was bringing out the idea of an alternative public leadership that KAMMI must strive for. And the peasant women seems to have a sense of this alternative leadership with their concept of "pantay-pantay" (equality) in the way a leader must relate to others.

Other than having certain good qualities, leaders are also expected to do more responsibilities in maintaining the life of the organization. Mira presented the specific responsibilities that are expected of leaders. These responsibilities included the following:

> 1) takes lead in implementing decisions, plans and programs of the organization;
> 2) raises the consciousness of the members through education (edukasyon), assessment and evaluation of actions;
> 3) takes responsibility in calling meetings and facilitating these meetings;
> 4) facilitates planning of program of action;
> 5) oversees and coordinates the action of the different committees;
> 6) provides guidance to the direction of the organization through close association with the members.
> 7) takes the responsibility that meetings are properly conducted.

Mira then went into aspects leaders must consider in conducting meetings. These include the following: 1) a relevant agenda must be prepared; 2) see to it that there is a balanced participation of members; 3) each important section of the agenda must have clear objectves; and 4) proceedings and minutes of the meeting must be documented or recorded by the secretary or any designated person. The last aspect here was not actually always done by the local chapters. For

example, the Calintaan chapter did not have a record of the minutes of their meetings when I ask them to give me one for this research. When I asked the newly-elected secretary and Ate Gansa if they could give me a record of the minutes of their meetings, they said they did not have one.

Simulation on styles of leadership. To identify styles of leadership Mira divided the women into groups and gave them different tasks to do to simulate different styles of leadership. One group was assigned to draw a home and family ("tahanan at pamilya"), the second group was assigned to draw the situation of the women in the economy ("pang-ekonomiyang kalagayan ng kababaihan"), and the third group was assigned to draw the political life of women ("pampulitikang pamumuhay ng kababaihan").

The work of the peasant women revealed as well their concept of women's place in the family, economy, and politics. The first group (on the family) came up with a drawing which showed "the woman suggesting to her husband that it was already opening of school and they do not yet have money for the tuition of their children. So the woman looked for other means of income, like raising a pig and selling it". This drawing indicated the role of the women in the family as contributing to its economic welfare. Generally from the experience of these women, it is they who look for other means of income to put up for the inadequate income of the family, especially for the education of their children. The drawing

also indicated the high value the women, like most Filipino families, place on education for their children. They will do all possible ways to earn additional income for this purpose. So when poor peasant families usually are unable to send their children beyond grade school or high school, it is not because they place a low value on education, it is because of poverty and the lack of government provisions to make educational opportunities available to the poor.

The second group (on women in the economy) drew a woman tending a cooperative store that she set up at the front section of their house. The women interpreted their drawing as:

> - A woman must not just be tied to the house ("bahay").
> - She must have means of income even if she usually stays at home ("bagamat namamalagi sa bahay").
> - If women are part of production, they have also a right ("karapatan") to sell ("maibenta") their own produce.
> - This way we are able to help in meeting the needs of the family and in preventing the exportation or going out ("pag-labas") of our own produce.
> - This way we are able to raise the livelihood of peasant women.
> - By selling our own produce directly to the community we are helping lower the prices of important basic products.
> - Then, we will be able to get away from importing fruits, like apples, from other countries.

This interpretation of the women indicates their consciousness of their place in Philippine economy. They see their economic activity in the village level in relation to the larger political economy. There is the awareness that they need to produce and create a market that is more oriented to local needs and one that maximizes the utilization of local

resources.

The third group (on the women's political life) drew a group of women having a meeting ("pulong"). They interpreted their drawing as:

> - Our drawing shows women joining and participating in political discussions ("usapang pampulitika"), and women participating in discussions about the local situation.
> - They are expressing how they feel about the women's rights in the political sphere ("karapatan ng kababaihan sa larangan ng pampulitika").
> - This shows that it is not only men who are capable of leadership, but also women.

This interpretation indicates that the peasant women, having been already involved in organizational politics, view their political participation as a right ("karapatan"), and that being leaders is being political. They are also appreciative of the capacity of women for leadership, they believe that this is not an ability endowed only to men.

Through this activity the women were actually teaching each other, and perhaps affecting each other's views about women's place in society. By talking to each other about their ideas and presenting this in a visual form the peasant women were actually articulating their redefinition of their roles in the family, economy and politics.

After the women's presentations of their groups' tasks, Mira led them to a second level of analysis, this time involving the process that evolved in each group as they went about accomplishing the task collectively. She posed the questions: How did you as members/or as leaders felt about what happened in your group task. The first group said that

they did not finish the drawing. They were still trying to figure out what they must do, and the leader of the group took over and the members just followed her. The members said that they felt insulted, confused, surprised, and hurt when the leader did this. The leader said she was amused ("natuwa"), but also felt a bit afraid ("natakot"). Mira drew out the idea that the dynamics of this group illustrated "autocratic leadership" ("makapangyarihang pamumuno") -- wherein the wishes of the leader is the only one to be followed, she does not accept mistakes, and that she puts herself as the center of the group stifling the participation of the other members.

The second group was commended as the most orderly. The members said that there was team work, unity, each of them participated in deciding what and how to do the task and that the leader gave them a sense of importance by appreciating their work. The leader reported that she realized that even if you do not command you can let a group do its work by a "soft way of talking" ("malumay na pananalita"), and that she realized she can also be a leader despite of herself ("puede na pala akong isang lider kahit na ganito lang ako") -- implying here that although she did not have a high formal education she realized she can also be a leader. The peasant women identified the style of leadership in their group as "democratic leadership" ("malayang pamumuno").

The third group reported that they did not feel their leader was helpful to them in accomplishing the task and they

felt bad about it: "The leader told us, it's all up to you what you want to do". They said they felt envious of the other groups where the leaders were helpful and the more they felt bad when they saw their own leader helping the other groups but not her own group. The leader of the group said that her conscience was bothered when she learned how the group felt bad about her not helping them, but then she also said that the members learned how to use their capacity to be leaders. The style of leadership in this group was identified as "pabaya" (there is no literal translation in English for this word, but Mira explained it as "no deep concern for the organization". One peasant woman, however, argued that this style of leadership may not always turn out bad, it can in fact at times lead to members learning to stand on their own feet ("matutong tumindig sa sarili niyang paa"). Another peasant woman, on the other hand, contended that a leader who is "pabaya" may mean electing new leaders.

After having identified the different styles of leadership, Mira ended the session with a question -- Can we reflect and think about which type of leaders are we? However, there was no time alloted to sharing about the peasant women's reflections about what they perceived were their dominant styles of leadership.

How to do social analysis. Another major topic discussed in this training was how to do social analysis. Nila facilitated the discussion of this topic. The discussion

focused on the concept of change, the relationship of change and the belief in predestined future, analyzing social problems and change, and the process and nature of change. In the following I will analyze the views/ideas/and perspectives on these concepts that the peasant women articulated during the deliberations that took place on these topics.

Despite the fact that there had been no significant structural changes in the political economy that dramatically improved the quality of life of the peasant women in Mindoro, the peasant leaders here have an optomistic view of change. For example, they all agreed to Nila's statement that "All things change". Ate Lorena's response, "Yes, people can change in their character, views and attitudes", eloquently articulates their optomistic view of change. That "people can change" is an abstraction of their experience of personal change as a result of their community and political involvement with KAMMI. Their testimonials of these experiences illustrate this. Ate Sarah, for example, experienced change in her social awareness and in her understanding about women:

> "Before we were not yet aware ("hindi pa tayo noon namumulat"). Our consciousness changed. Before we were not yet organized and no education ("pag-aaral"), we did not yet know the happenings around us and we did not yet have awareness about women".

Ate Laya, who is also active in her church, experienced a new meaning and view of "church" ("simabahan") in her political

involvement with KAMMI, in which she now sees "church" as one that actively responds to social situations in the community:

> Before, my awareness ("pakaalam ko") because I was working in the church, was simply to pray and read the Bible. But I became aware ("naunawaan ko") that the church must not isolate ("hindi dapat umiwas") itself from the situation in the community ("kanayunan"). My awareness/perspective ("pananaw") changed when I joined ("sumalo") this organization.

Others learned social skills as they become more involved in the activities of KAMMI. Ate Lorena, for instance, learned diplomacy in dealing with others. She shared to the group:

> Before when I was not yet with the organization, I would easily get irritated. But now I first try to understand, and say words that will not hurt ("hindi makasira") my members. I realized that too much liniency ("sobrang pag-uunawa") without discipline, is not also good for the organization. What is good is that there is change in all aspects of your life when you are part of the organization.

The increased awareness of the peasant women influenced their behavioral response to certain situations that contradict their new understandings and perspectives about gender relations. For example, Ate Lalay learned how to assert before her husband: "Before I did not know how to talk ("makipag-usap") to people. I was always submissive ("sunod-sunuran") to my husband. But now, not anymore, we now decide together". Another said: "My husband did not want me to come to the seminar, but I came". And Ate Juanita, a very young peasant woman who became aware of the sexual division of labor in farmwork, even learned to plow the fields although her father gets angry when she does it because he thinks it is a "man's job".

As the peasant women get to exercise leadership roles they also get to become aware of other skills they have to learn. Ate Sarah realized the usefulness of verbal skills, "I realized that when people ask you questions you must be able to answer them well". Evenmore, Ate Lorena realized the importance of skills in gathering information in their work: "We must be resourceful and patient in gathering information or knowledge ("mapagsaliksik") in order that we understand our situation".

Most of the peasant women who attended this training, pointed to the educational sessions/trainings/seminars of KAMMI as the source of their increased awareness: "In my joining educational sessions ("pag-aaral") I also learned a lot...."; "Before I did not like to join the organization because I thought the people will just talk bad ("ichichismis") about me. But when I went to the seminar I learned a lot of things"; "At first I did not know the situation of women. But gradually I began to understand it since that time Ate Lorena spoke in the seminar".

Thus, as these peasant women leaders became more involved in the politics of their collective struggle, their views about themselves, their perceptions and responses to the world around them have changed. Their personal experience of this process of change served as a basis for their conceptualization and theorizing about change. They understood the idea that people's consciousness about the

social world and their views about themselves can change because they have experienced it personally in their lives. They theorized that their experience of this change came about through the organization, through their association with others in the organization, through the educational sessions ("pag-aaral"). However, the opportunity to come together and collectively reflect about their experiences and articulate their ideas and conceptions about these experiences is a necessary context or ingredient in making sense of their concrete experiences. Fr. John Doherty, a Jesuit sociology professor of mine in the Philippines, said: "Once you are able to talk about your experience and reflect about it, you begin to own that experience and allow yourself and others to learn from it". An opportunity for the peasant women to talk about their experience allows them to "own" that experience from which transferrable knowledge can result. Being able to talk about their experiences together has in itself a conscientizing element.

The peasant women's capacity to make abstractions or conceptualizations about their experience of change, disputes the stereotype that peasants have little interest in ideas, that they have "low level of thinking", which others who occupy a higher social position in Philipppine society hold. Middle class people tend to look down on the intellectual capacities of peasants because of their low level of education. However, the peasant women's articulations show

that they are capable of theorizing from their experience.

Having experienced personal change in their lives and increased critical consciousness of the world around them, the peasant women do not believe in a predestined future ("takda ng kapalaran"). Contrary to the assumption of Oscar Lewis' "culture of poverty" theory that poor people have a fatalistic view about life, the peasant women are aware of their poverty but they do not believe this is predestined. Ate Juanita succinctly expresses this: "For me, our future is not predestined. Like us poor, that is not predetermined. We must work hard". Ate Lorena, who is active in her church, does not even think that God has predetermined their future: "It is possible that God did not predetermined our future. Doing belongs to people, mercy belongs to God ("Nasa tao ang gawa, nasa Diyos ang awa"). We are the ones to make our future, our situation in life". Ate Laya, who is also active in her church, affirmed this with her view of human freedom God endowed people: "No, our future is not predestined because God gave people the freedom ("kalayaan") to reflect ("magpasya") and to act ("gumawa")". Since they believe that their condition in life is not pretermined, they think that one can shape one's future by planning. "If you do not plan your life, you will not know the different ways and things that must be done", says Ate Lorena.

Contrary to the popular notion that poor people are lazy, these poor peasant women do not also view themselves as lazy,

in fact, they see themselves as among those who must work hard ("magsikap") in order to progress ("para umunlad"). If their condition in life is not predestined, then they believe that hard work will improve their lot. Ate Lucy for example said: "For me our condition in life is not also predestined. Because if your situation in life is poor, then you must work hard towards your progress". Benedict Kervliet (1990) also gives a similar account of poor people's view in his study of a Philippine village in Central Luzon region, he named San Ricardo:

> When poor people discuss the course of their own lives, one pronounced theme is industriousness. Laziness is not part of their self-image. On the contrary, poor people see themselves as always "on the move" (kumikilos), looking for ways to improve their standard of living and exploring various avenues: they travel to distant places to work, attempt to make extra cash through petty trade, buy small goats and pigs to sell. . .(pp.169-170).

The peasant women have faith in people, that people are endowed with the capacity and freedom to shape the world they live in. They are hopeful that through action they can achieve progress and improve their situation. And this is probably another source of their persistence in their struggle as peasant women, despite the difficulties that they experience in organizing. They are coming together because they believe they can change their situation. And their interest in understanding the social situation that affects them is part of their action for change.

However, for the women, understanding the situation

alone without action is not enough to change a situation. Ate Lorena for example asserted: "Even if you know the problem, but if you do not do anything about it, then nothing will happen". They do not think of change as singly-caused. For them a situation can change "because of oneself" ("sarili"), "experience" ("karanasan"), "because of action" ("pagkilos"), and "because of education" ("pag-aaral"). On the other hand, Nila, the facilitator for this topic, presented the concept of internal and external factors to change. She explained "external" and "internal" factors as if they were dichotomous that it was difficult for the peasant women to understand. It did not seem important for them (the peasant women) to identify when factors to change are internal or external. Rightly so, for in reality there is no clear dichotomy between the two, for they interact in any situation. But it was important for Ate Lorena to be able to analyze the good and weak points of leaders and the strengths and talents of members so that they can be used in the organization: "We can also analyze the leaders and members of the organization. Where are the leaders good and weak at? We must also regularly analyze our members. See where they are good at and we put them in the position where they can be good at. We must also consider her time, how much time she has". Nila added: "In doing analysis of members we must also see their class origin, know the region where they come from so we would know their customs, what percentage of the population are

women, and know the occupations of the women". There was no actual discussion, however, on how to gather information on these.

Nila further introduced the idea of analyzing and comparing contradictions ("tunggalian") in analyzing a social situation, the importance of seeing how a particular situation relates to "the larger system or structures in society", and the concept of "quantitative change" (example increase in the number of organized peasants) and "qualitative change" (example change in agrarian relations, land reform). Although she tried to illustrate these general points with concrete examples, her presentation and her style of facilitating was more theoretical, telling-method, rather than evocative or experiential in which the peasant women would actually do the analyzing. There was a moment when the peasant women began analyzing when Nila said that to examine problems in their local chapters they must relate it to "broader issues" and asked the question, "Like, what are the problems that are arising in your chapters?" In response to her question the peasant women mentioned "lack of funds" in doing their organizational work, and "fear" of the "military", of "husbands" and of the "barrio captain". Ate Lorena, a provincial leader, analyzed that of these, financial is the major problem: "Financial is the root problem. For example, you want to go to meetings but you do not have money for transportation". But Cristina, one of the professionals

providing support for KAMMI, rejected this important problem that the peasant women were raising: "Well, if everything will be coming from (SP), then we will not be helping you anymore because you will become dependent. Afterall, there are other projects". With this statement, Ate Ara and Ate Lorena kept quiet for a while, as if embarassed by what Cristina said. But instead of withdrawing from the discussion, Ate Lorena said after gaining back her composure: "O.K. let's talk about major problems". The analysis of the peasant women of their own actual problems was thus now subdued. Ate Lorena, however, still tried to bring up the issue of lack of funds and its consequences to maintaining interest of members in a beginning project: "For example, in our chapter, at first there was a funding for the project, but then when the funding was just little, some members were not anymore interested, they left". Nila responded: "It is not only funding that is the problem, it is also education. For example, in setting up cooperatives, it is not only funds that is needed but also knowledge of accounting, otherwise the organization will not know if it is gaining something it could distribute to the members. The problem of lack of education should not be seen in isolation from the other aspects of the organization". Ate Gloria, an AMIHAN national peasant leader, affirmed Nila's statement: "In my view, it is lack of education ("kulang sa pag-aaral"). We do not just look at the financial aspect". Nila's and Ate Gloria's response was more of selling the idea

of the importance of education in organizational work rather than actually analyzing the financial situation of local chapters as an organizational problem.

The lack of financial resource that the two peasant women mentioned here in their analysis of the problems arising in their chapters, is actually a practical problem with which they must cope in their everyday organizing work. Although from the perspective of SP, the financial problem is related to or may be subsumed under the peasants' need for training and education, it is one of the major felt needs of the peasant women, which they talk about even outside this training session. From the perspective of the peasant women, money is concretely related to other things that they want to do -- whether it is to start a socio-economic project or to organize or mobilize for a study session. "You want to go to meetings but you have no money for transportation". Being poor, this is something they experience more than middle-class women who may also be doing organizing work. Lack of resources that the village peasant women experience in their organizational and political work is related to broader issues of class formation in the Philippines in which peasant women are empoverished, and to the larger political issue of allocation of state funds in which peasant women have virtually no access. Foreign development aid, for example, that the government gets does not trickle down to village organizations with political change agenda, like KAMMI, but

partly used for counter-insurgency in the villages, if not benefitting mostly businessmen who have government connections. These interrelated issues have organizational and tactical implications.

Assessment of the training. At the end of the training, Mira gave out an evaluation form of the seminar. After the peasant women accomplished them, Mira gathered the results together and reported it back orally to the peasant women. The responses indicated that the peasant women found the seminar useful for them. Some of them said that they learned something that they did not know before the seminar. Others said that their understanding about organizing and how to organize correctly has broadened and improved ("lumawak ang kaisipan ko na magagamit ko sa pag-oorganisa"). Some said that they were happy that KAMMI is beginning to revive again. The peasant women were also very candid about what they found difficult to understand. Some mentioned that the topic on "how to do social analysis", some deep terms ("malalim na pananalita") like "kantitatibo" and "kalitatibo", and the topic on how to analyze contradictions ("tunggalian") were difficult to understand [I touched this earlier in this chapter]. One said that the presentation on the national situation in the Philippines ("pangkalahatang pananaw sa pambansang kalagayan") needed more explanation. Most of them, however, see this kind of education ("pag-aaral") valuable and recommended that they be continued ("patuloy ang pag-aaral").

Hence, although through actual organizing the peasant women can learn practical knowledge about organizing, they also see that formal training sessions like this can also be useful. First, it helps them conceptualize their own experience, learn from others' experience, and then relate or broaden their practical experiential knowledge with the theoretical knowledge of others. However, the real test of the practical value of formal theoretical training sessions like this, lies whether in fact the peasant women have found them useful and helpful in their organizing work. And such outcome is not something that could be easily and immediately measured. My own observations at the time of my fieldwork was that the facilitators of the leadership training were themselves not very much immersed in organizing with the peasant women, they themselves were not living in the villages where the local chapters were located, so they do not really experience the day to day village life that can affect the ebb and flow of the situation that can impact the organizational life of the peasant women. Although sometimes the support professionals (SP) get a chance to stay in the village for a couple of days or so when they conduct training sessions or seminar in the local village level, they are not really immersed in organizational process of the village chapters. The peasant women and SP have different perspectives on immersion in the process of organizing and training. For example, some KAMMI leaders give importance to immersion. The provincial president

of KAMMI, who is from the rank of the women peasantry and has good amount of experience in organizing said to me once in one of our conversations that she would like to see someday the support professionals to be more integrated and immersed in their village life. On the other hand support professionals have a different view of immersion -- they do not see immersion in village life essential to their institutional support for KAMMI. They see their role as providing support for the peasant movement through organizing training and educational sessions and looking for financial resources from funding agencies, especially non-governmental agencies, to help finance the peasants' socio-economic projects and, to explore and facilitate the experimentation on alternative technologies for a more indigenous agricultural developmenmt. In their perspective direct organizing of the peasantry is not their primary task, but is the primary task of the peasant women and that direct peasant organizers must be from the ranks of the peasantry. In SP's view, by providing training sessions to more peasant women so that they acquire the knowledge and skills in being leaders, they are providing support to their movement. This differences in perspectives seem to have influenced the nature of SP's training program for KAMMI. My own observation is that while this training was very infomative, it was lacking in contextual training, that I have observed was being done by some community organizers in urban slum areas in Metro-Manila. For example, in 1976,

I have observed community organizers in Navotas urban slum community who were also involved in developing leaders from the ranks of the slum dwellers. Since they were living in the slum community, their training of community leaders was more contextualized than theoretical. They were in a position to throw back to the community issues, experiences, and problems to be analyzed as they were emerging because they were immersed into the day to day life of the slum community. When the trained community leaders were ready to be on their own, then they would begin to pull out from the community, however, with continued institutional supportive link to the community.

In the next chapter I briefly discuss the problems indicated by the peasant leaders in their relationship with SP as a support institution, although I discuss this only lightly because I did not really look into this at a considerable depth because it was not really the focus of my research. But I got a sense (unintentionally) of the potential tension that can happen in the relationship between a support institution and a peasant mass organization that wants to claim autonomy and yet be part of the broader movement for change in the Philippines.

Discussion and summary

This discussion on some of the ways KAMMI integrates education and consciousness-raising in its politics indicates

a few points. First, it indicates some of the sources of the increased awareness of the peasant women about their situation and how it relates to the larger issues in Philippine development and underdevelopment. Their awareness develops as they reflect on their own concrete experiences together, as they talk to each other their concerns, as they get more and more involved in the different levels of organization, as they get exposed to other sources of information and to educational sessions and discussions on issues. Their awareness increases as they get to relate with other peasant leaders outside of their local village, with national leaders who are more politically aware and critically conscious, and with people who may not necessarily come from the peasantry but are also involved in the support work for the peasant movement or are also engaged in the larger movement for change and social justice in the Philippines.

Second, as working class women, peasant women come to women's organization not entirely devoid of feminist class awareness. Some of the comments they have articulated in the deliberations show that they have an understanding of the relationship of gender and class although they may not have expressed this awareness in academic language.

Third, the peasant women develop concepts about leadership and what being a good leader means through their experience. Their way of articulating it, the language they use to express their own intellectual abstraction I found very

powerful because it is coming from their conceptualization of their own experience. It is this knowledge from below that still needs to be appreciated among those who construct knowledge about development and politics in the Third World. None of the leaders spoke of military might, nor of dominance as a characteristic of leadership. What they spoke about was being in a sense of equality with others ("pantay-pantay na pagtingin sa kapwa") as being a good leader. They spoke of having strong principles and courage to stand up against oppression, of having a critical vision and broad understanding about the local and national situation affecting them, and of being able to accept one's mistakes as important qualities of leadership. Some of them also spoke of how to mobilize members into action to accomplish a goal without having to command them as a good aspect of democratic leadership.

Fourth, education and training sessions, such as leadership training, also develop in the peasant women confidence: "I realized I could also be a leader even if I am just like this"; "we should not be ashamed if we have no higher education, because we are also learning, studying like the teachers". Thus, it helps them acquire a better self-definition that helps them reject society's label of peasant women's social status as "of low education" ("mababa and pinag-aralan"). In the Philippines, where people with low education are looked down, a peasant organization like KAMMI

which serves as what some of the peasant women say "school" ("paaralan") of peasant women, has a very significant educational value at the grassroots level. But the peasant women here conceive of "pag-aaral" (education) not in reference to formal education, but rather educational sessions that would be useful in transforming their situation.

Fifth, educational sessions, "pag-aaral" as the peasant women call them, are an important part of KAMMI's politics because they serve as alternative sources of information, views and analysis of Philippine situation that official knowledge may not provide. As the peasant women come together to discuss issues, they give personal meaning to these issues and see different ways of viewing them. They relate their personal experiences to these issues -- such as when they talked about the increase of prices they directly experience and how that relates to the issue of foreign debt. This process is part of political consciousness-raising, which is an important aspect of KAMMI's politics. In itself is a form of resistance to control of information and knowledge that often takes place in a repressive society, or even in a society where the media is not independent from the control of the government and corporate power (like in the case of the United States).

NOTES

1. Benedict J. Tria, in his study of class and status in San Ricardo (a psuedonym), a village in Central Luzon region of the Philippines, also presents a similar analysis of the consciousness of the poor villagers -- that they have their own perceptions about the class relations in their village. See Everyday Politics in the Philippines. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

2. Interview with a staff member of the Research and Documentation Desk of Mindoro Institute of Development.

3. I have gathered information about land occupation from interviews with two peasant leaders of KAMMI, a female member of KMP-Mindoro, who at the time of my fieldwork was holding a position in the organization that enables her to know about the issue, and a researcher of Mindoro Institute for Development.

4. My discussion of KAMMI's initiative on land occupation, as a peasant women's organization independent from KMP, is based primarily on this letter and documentation.

CHAPTER 6

PROBLEMS, TENSIONS, AND DIFFICULTIES

As KAMMI goes about its politics of resistance it experiences difficulties and problems. This chapter focuses on the problems and difficulties the peasant women face in their struggle.

Militarization

Militarization, as already indicated in the previous chapter, has posed tremendous difficulties in organizing peasant women. I am reiterating this problem here because this is an overiding problem of the peasant women in their political action. Since militarization is more intense in the rural villages where peasant women live, peasant women experience the difficulties posed by militarization in organizing more directly than urban women. Hence, one of the most frequently mentioned problems that the peasant women encounter in their organizational work is militarization.

Organizing under militarization is organizing under abnormal conditions. Peasant women face restrictions which limit their freedom to act. For example, peasant leaders have always to get permit from the local government to hold

meetings. Not only does this add more work for them, it also takes more time from their already busy schedule. Under normal conditions, citizens, who are coming together to make changes in their lives, must have the right to hold meetings freely. However, the peasant women, must comply with this restriction or run the risk of their coming together being labelled by the military as subversive, without they (the peasant women) having any legal evidence to protect themselves.

Organizing under militarization demands tremendous risks from peasant women. As organizers, peasant women must assume leadership roles. As leaders they face tremendous risks since the military usually direct first their harassment on leaders. Mass leaders, who publically articulate for the organization or the peasant movement, are more visible and therefore have the greater risk of being harassed by the military. These risks are real in the everyday lives of women. For example, Ate Ara, who is a provincial leader and had experienced military harassment, said: "In my work here, it is my life that is at stake" ("Sa trabaho ko dito, buhay ko ang nakataya"). As citizens, peasant women must have the basic right to organization without risk to their lives, but the peasant women of KAMMI do not have such right.

Another difficulty that arise from militarization is dealing with the division among the village people that the politics of repression has caused. By paying informers, the

military is able to divide the people. This creates distrust that makes organizing more difficult. Thus, the more personal relationships in the village that could be an asset to organizing, has been neutralized by militarization. For instance, Ate Gansa and Teka would often talk about a woman in their village who live a few yards from their houses as suspicious, so they would not generally let her know about their meetings. They also told me not to go to her house and expose myself too much to her because they said they could not be certain whether to trust her or not ("hindi kami nakakasiguro sa kanya").

Mobilizing people has also become more difficult under militarization because of fear. Given the past experience of many of the peasant women during the 1987 military operations and harassment, some peasant women formerly active are now afraid to join the present efforts of KAMMI to revive and reorganize. While it is true that peasant women leaders, who are taking the risks, have displayed courage, there are also peasant women who still are afraid of the possible consequences of their political action.

Militarization has made it difficult for peasant women organizers to stabilize their gains, making it difficult for their organization to maintain cumulative change. For example, the 1987 military harassment aborted many organizational plans, such as the cooperatives they were in the process of setting up.

Inadequate Financial Resources

Lack of financial resources is another major problem that the local village chapters encounter in their organizational work. Since their members are poor peasant women, they usually do not have the extra money to donate to their organization, more so to pool immediate financial resources needed to initiate projects, or even to mobilize members. This is a very real basic problem that the village chapters experience. Like militarization, this is one of their most frequently mentioned problem. Not only do they talk about this problem informally outside organizational meetings, but they also attempt to bring this up in the formal meetings (as we have seen in the provincial leadership training session I discussed in the previous chapter).

The lack of financial resources of local village chapters puts tremendous sacrifices on committed peasant women leaders and organizers. The story of Ate Lalay of the local chapter in Calintaan, provides a good example. During one of my evening conversations while in the village, I learned that Ate Lalay had to go around to get the signatures of the members for the petition letter for PARCODE to be sent to President Aquino. PARCODE (People's Agrarian Reform Code) was formulated by the Congress for People's Agrarian Reform, a national coalition of peasant organizations, on June 25-26, 1988 in Manila. It is the peasants' alternative agrarian land reform program to the government's Comprehensive Agrarian

Reform Law, which the peasants say is biased to the interest of landlords. [I dicsuss this more thoroughly in the section of AMIHAN's national politics]. Seeing the importance of this petition signing as part of the national campaign for PARCODE, Ate Lalay took time to get the signatures of the members of her chapter. She said, "I did not have money, so I just walked and walked. I was hungry, but I did not have money to buy any food, so I just did not have meals". Part of Ate Lalay's story also indicated that there was in fact money sent by the national office of AMIHAN (the national federation of peasant women's organization of which KAMMI is federated) for the PARCODE campaign. [I got a confirmation of this information myself from the national office of AMIHAN during my participation in its National Council's meeting in Manila]. But the money was not sent directly to KAMMI's provincial leaders, or to the Finance Committee of KAMMI. AMIHAN national office sent the money to SP for it to manage the disbursement. But based on the statement of Ate Lalay, the peasant women did not have control of the disbursement of the money. She said,

> "The policy of (SP) was "refund". Show us how much you spent for the campaign, and we will refund you. But I did not have money to spend, so when (SP) asked me how much I spent for working on the petition-signing, I told them I did not spend anything. But of course, I got hungry and I got very tired from walking a lot. If they gave me some money, that I could spend for the task, then, I would have had the money to spend on transportation and food".

While lack of financial resource is a real problem of the

peasant women who are organizing on the village level, KAMMI's control of whatever money there is for their organizational support is also an issue. SP, as a non-governmental support institution for peasants in Mindoro, has control in the management of funds. Funding agencies do not give their funds directly to the peasant organizations, they course it through SP, who then sets up policies and conditions for the disbursement of funds. AMIHAN national office also followed this procedure, although KAMMI is organizationally linked with AMIHAN.

Some of the peasant women of KAMMI speak, in their everyday conversations, about their lack of control of whatever available funds support institutions might have for peasants. Ate Ara, the provincial president of KAMMI at the time of fieldwork, said during an informal conversations with some peasant women (including an AMIHAN national peasant leader) during their leadership training, that she told the director of a funding agency in Manila that works with SP, to just give the funds for buying a sewing machine for their cooperative sewing project directly to their local chapter. But, "the director refused and said that he would prefer to give the funds directly to (SP) and it is up for (SP) to give you the conditions for receiving the funds". At one instance, Ate Ara also told me during one of our informal conversations that she feels humiliated ("para akong nangliliit") everytime she has to ask or request for funds from SP. She said this to

me after we had lunch in a small cheap restaurant in San Jose together with the rest of the staff of SP. She did not even feel comfortable that the director of SP paid for her and her companion's lunch, while all of us non-peasants paid for our own lunch. It is indicated here that there is a desire in the peasant women for self-sufficiency on which their sense of dignity partly rests.

Other peasant women leaders also talk about their lack of control of funds that SP might have in support for the peasant women's struggle. Three provincial leaders from Mamburao also mentioned during my interview with them that it would facilitate action faster if SP gives them whatever funds SP might have for the projects of their organization, and it is up for their organization to decide on how to disperse and on what projects the organization would use the funds for. They said that they could do more organizing work on the local level if they have funds for transportation, even to pay for child care while they devote their time for mobilizing and organizing. In their view, projects could also be initiated faster if funds are readily available in their local organization.

On another occassion in Magsaysay, some leaders of the local chapter also were talking during informal conversations about their lack of control of SP's disbursement of funds. Three local leaders of Magsaysay chapter were talking angrily about their disappointment over a production loan they said

was promised by SP but later SP told them there was no money for production loan. For example, Ate Lorena said angrily,

> Why did (SP) make us hope and hope, only to disappoint us at the end? It is now very close to planting season, but we do not yet have money. We have gone to money lenders ("usurero"), but they do not want to lend us. They told me, don't you have an organization who lends you? You see, these usurers do not want organizations of peasants. They get threatened. They think that organized peasants will demand lower interest rates. So they do not want to lend to peasants who get organized. Now, it is only (SP) that we can run to.

The need for production loans was a real immediate need for many of the peasant women of KAMMI at the time of fieldwork. They see SP, being a support institution for them, as a source of alternative production loan. But SP did not put priority on production loans in their disbursement of funds at the time of fieldwork. SP's financial officer said that "(SP) has no funds for production loans", that SP "prefers to appropriate funds for socio-economic projects that could bring more returns, than production loans", and that in fact "there are no more banks that lend out production loans". There is also the ideological reason, that SP "prefers to encourage peasants to organize credit cooperatives as an alternative loaning system for their own production needs". This is within their institutional goal to support peasant's projects that "can lead to self-reliance". Here then is conflict: SP's goal is long-range, while the disappointment of the peasant leaders of Magsaysay indicated their concern for response to their immediate need. Even to begin credit cooperatives, peasants need outside source for initial funds

because they do not have excess income to put aside. Yet, even if they are able to get funding for credit cooperatives that could be an alternative to usury and dependence on SP, the peasant women and their peasant husbands will still remain exploited as long as they remain tillers of lands that do not belong to them. They will still be tied to debt to their own cooperatives as long as most of their produce go to the landlords and there is no state subsidy to their losses when natural and military calamities destroy their crops. SP and KAMMI faces the on-going challenge of coming up an integrated organizational model that will both respond to the immediate needs of peasants (reforms) and the need for structural change that is more long range (more radical change strategies) that confront the roots of the peasants' poverty and exploitation. The experience of Ate Lorena illustrates this. In 1988 Ate Lorena and her peasant husband was able to borrow production loan from SP to cultivate a land that does not belong to them, but which they rent with 30 cavans of palay per harvest season. From their December 1988 harvest of 75 cavans of palay, they had a deficit after these things were deducted -- 30 cavans went to the landlord, 15 cavans were set aside for seedlings for the next planting season, 11 cavans for payment for fertilizers and pesticides, and the rest for paying debts that they incurred for their daily needs of food and other basic necessities. According to Ate Lorena, they had to borrow from a usurer (informal money lender) in order to pay

back their production loan with SP. In their view it was important for them to be able to pay back SP their loan so that they would not have a bad credit record with them ("hindi kami masero sa opisina"). For their daily food consumption after the December 1988 harvest, they had to borrow 4,500 pesos which they had to pay with 54 cavans of palay in the next harvest season of December 1989. Ate Lorena was worried that they would have again a deficit in that coming harvest season. Ate Lorena's experience (which is not particular to her) show that availability of production loans to landless peasants does not guarantee full emancipation from their poverty and exploitation basically rooted in the broader structure of economic relations, such as the structure of landownership, relations of production and the market, and the politics of repression that maintains this hegemony. There is awareness in Ate Lorena about the complexity of their problem -- the connection between their poverty and the issue of land, that this is a long struggle and difficult because of militarization:

> There is an alternative to our situation. Basically it rests in being able to own land. Even at the very start, we were already talking about our landlessness. It will take a long time to achieve this. Because there are so many big things happening, like the military -- if possible they would like to dismantle ("wasakin") all peasant organizations. The military is an obstacle to our action. In all situations it is like that, even the pastors are being suspected also.

Ate Lorena also has some sense of the difference between action that is ameliorative (reform) and action that is more

radical. She pointed to the fact that if they probably have some funds to start up some projects perhaps their situation might experience some alleviation ("baka umango an buhay namin"), but if this fails they would be forced to resort to land occupation:

> We have talked about that perhaps if we could have some funds we might be able to improve our situation. But we will have the strength of will, if there is no alternative, to do land occupation. There is a plan, some time in December 1989, to organize land occupation in Mamburao. There is a large idle land there, this is being planned.

The difficulty in integrating response to immediate needs and long range structural change, as experienced by MIND and KAMMI does not spring as much from the lack of ideological understanding of this organizational model. This is indicated by the fact that KAMMI's organizational goals aim at addressing both immediate economic needs of peasants (through the setting up of cooperatives) and structural change (through political consciousness-raising, organization and mobilization, and more radical political action, such as, land occupation that confronts the unequal structure of land ownership in Mindoro). SP, as a support institution for peasants, feels the tension between responding to immediate economic needs and long-range structural change when it is confronted with limited funds and the issue of allocating funds to what type of projects becomes crucial. In resolving the tension, SP brings in other consideration as to what type of projects are most likely to be funded by outside funding

agencies. It is easier to get outside funding for cooperative income-generating socio-economic projects than for production loans. For the peasant women of KAMMI, however, the production loan issue is more of a practical concern, than ideological, since it is they who experience in their everyday lives and everyday organizational politics what it means not to be able to have the immediate resources needed to farm or to have available funds to sustain the interest of the peasant women who initially come to organizational meetings expecting some concrete economic help.

How does a mass organization (like KAMMI and AMIHAN) and a support institution (like SP), deal with the perrenial issue of integrating response to immediate needs and the long range goal of self-reliance? What is the best way to change an exploitative economic system and an oppressive political system in such a way that political action responds both to the immediate needs of the peasant women and their families and the need for radical change in development policies and politics that impact on the everyday lives of the peasant women, men and children? These are on-going complex questions that KAMMI and SP are apparently faced with constantly in their struggle for change in Philippine society. Both levels of political action -- one directed at responding to immediate needs and one directed at long range radical structural change -- need funds to begin and sustain them. Both levels of political action seem to serve than contradict each other.

However, the balanced integration of both levels of political action is partly affected by the availability of resources, such as finances, that is a constant problem of non-governmental organizations who have to rely on voluntary contributions or funding from non-governmental agencies. While a huge amount of IMF loans are going to the Philippines, grassroot organizations, like KAMMI, are not the primary beneficiaries of these loans. Even if the IMF make its funds directly available to KAMMI or AMIHAN, they (KAMMI and AMIHAN) will have to deal with the dilemma of accepting the conditions of tied aid that the IMF subjects the borrowing Third World country. In meeting its financial need, KAMMI, AMIHAN, and SP are then faced also with the need to mobilize sources of alternative funding that are sympathetic to their development change agenda.

Relationship with Support Institution

The movement for change in the Philippines, of which KAMMI and AMIHAN are part, has attained some degree of institutionalization. By this, I refer to the degree by which certain functions of the movement has been stabilized and structured so that it does not simply depend on the presence of certain personalities and can expect to continue even with the absence of such personalities. Although this was not the focus of my study, there is some indication that this institutionalization has been achieved to a certain degree.

The emergence of support institutions for the promotion of the peasant movement, for example, is one indication of this degree of institutionalization in the movement. Support institutions also become the venue of professionals' support work for the peasant movement and its grassroot politics. The presence of SP in Mindoro is one specific indicator of this degree of institutionalization on the local level. The staff of SP are not necessarily peasants.

While institutionalization, on one hand, can be an indication of success and seriousness of the movement, on the other hand it seems it can also be a source of tension. Although this was not the focus of my study (therefore I did not investigate it further) there was some indication that at the time of fieldwork, KAMMI was experiencing some tension in its relationship with SP. Although SP certainly had played significant support role in organizing KAMMI, especially in its revival and re-organization phase after the peasant women exprienced setbacks from the 1987 military operations in Mindoro, some of the peasant leaders were expriencing tension in their relationship with SP.

One form of tension that some of the peasant women leaders experience arise from their desire for autonomy and the institutional support role SP perceives it can provide KAMMI. While SP, through its Women's Desk, sees its role as providing technical support for KAMMI (in the form of education, training in the management of socio-economic

projects, leadership training and organizing, and in securing outside funding for their socio-economic projects), some of the peasant leaders of KAMMI had expressed the desire to set up a peasant women's organization and movement that is autonomous from an institution. For example, Ate Ara, one of the provincial peasant leaders of KAMMI, said:

> We wish that we set up an organization, a movement that is not under an institution, because we can not move freely. What I want to happen is that the movement is really ours, controlled by us, that no one is deciding for us. I like to set up an organization that is not controlled by professionals. They do not have a real grasp of the situation of the peasant women because they are not peasants themselves. Even though I have no education I have knowledge and experience in organizing that they do not have.

While Ate Ara expressed desire for KAMMI's autonomy from an institution, she, on the other, expressed a desire for more direct communication with the National Office of AMIHAN, the national federation of peasant women to which KAMMI is federated: "I told AMIHAN why they should not just directly communicate with KAMMI. They still let communications go through (SP)". Ate Ara was the elected Provincial President of KAMMI at the time of fieldwork. Her position in KAMMI put her in a situation wherein she had to deal more constantly with SP and AMIHAN. Her claim for more direct communication with AMIHAN National Office on matters directly concerning KAMMI finds legitimacy in her capacity as the elected president of KAMMI. This claim is relevant to her desire for autonomy for KAMMI.

Ate Ara also perceived an attempt in SP to distinguish

itself from the organizational nature of KAMMI. She quoted one of the director of SP as saying: "Our policies as an institution is different from yours". It was not clear though at what context this statement was said, but it somehow indicated that there were some policies that SP had that the peasant women leaders did not quite agree. For example, in Ate Ara's informal conversation with another peasant leader, there was reference made to their disagreement with SP's previous policy of giving out certain loans directly to individual members. They prefered that SP course the loan distribution through their organization because they said, if otherwise, it does not give importance to the organization and it undermines their organization's usefulness to the members.

From the perspective of peasant women leaders who do the legwork of direct organizing, also there seems to be some tension over when SP should come in with its support. For example, Ate Ara said:

> When they see that the project, that we have initiated through our sweat and tirelessness, is already getting successful, then, that is the time that they will support it, because that is important in acquiring funds from the funding agency.

Although SP does not see its role as initiator of projects for the peasant women, there seems to be some expectation among some peasant leaders that they (SP) also get involve in direct organizing or at least get themselves immersed in the process of organizing in the village level. One provincial leader of KAMMI, for instance says: "They will come to the village for

3 days to give BOS, after that no more, we are left on our own, they don't stay".

At the time of my fieldwork, the main thrust of SP's Women's Desk is providing training, education, funding for, monitoring, and evaluation of projects that the local chapters of KAMMI may initiate. But it seems that support is needed in all phases of local chapters' initiative, and each phase needs a particular kind of support. Ate Ara's statement indicates that local chapters' initiative needs support more from a support institution when it is failing and is just beginning, than when it is becoming more successful. Initiating a project, for example, requires the groundwork of organizing, but the local chapters do not have funds for organizing work as well as full time organizers to do full-time organizing. Some provincial leaders, in fact, mentioned the need for full-time peasant organizers in KAMMI, but there are no funds to support full-time peasant women organizers. In many cases, local village chapters do not even have money to spend for transportation when they want to do organizing. Some leaders who are able to put some of their own money into organizing work, feel the double burden of financial support for their own family needs and expenses in organizing work. Ate Lorena for example said: "We lack organizational budget, for example expenses in transportation. I spend here, I spend there. That is why some times I am thinking of taking a leave first, because I spend a lot of time there and I could spend my time

where I could earn more to meet our needs." She feels that her work in the movement is all sacrifices ("lahat sakripisyo"). Even in cases wherein the peasant women are able to meet together, often times there is very little food for those who come to the meeting. I have observed this for example during the village chapter leadership training seminar in Calintaan. Whereas during the provincial leadership training that was held in the office of SP had enough good food, in this local village chapter leadership training there was very little food. It is not the policy of SP to fund local village seminars since they expect the local village chapter to put a counterpart for the training they receive from SP. In the institutional policy of SP, the expenses the local village chapter incurs in bringing the people together for the training serves as their counterpart.

Despite the fact that the lack of funding for local village organizing affects rapid organizational growth and puts tremendous sacrifices on the peasant women, SP and the National Office of AMIHAN do not allocate funding more for local village organizing. As a national policy AMIHAN provides funding for regional coalition for two reasons: a) that the federation does not have enough money, b) that if local village chapters do not fund their own local organization how can they call it really their own. These two reasons were explained by the support professional who was then working in the National Office of AMIHAN, as coordinator

of the Office during the AMIHAN's National Council Meeting wherein I was a participant observer. However, not every peasant woman national leader agree with this policy. In an informal conversation, one of the peasant women national leaders brought out the issue that if there is any funding where AMIHAN needs to put, it is in the local village chapters because "they are the roots of the movement" ("sila ang ubod ng kilusan"). But according to her, her idea was dismissed by the support professional.

There is also the need to study further if KAMMI's relationship with a support institution does not stifle the initiative of the peasant women and the full use of their potentials and capacities. While it is in the good intention of SP to provide support towards the formation of KAMMI as an independent peasant women's organization, some tension experienced by some of KAMMI's leaders indicated that it might be useful to assess further and more systematically if in fact this good intention is actually leading to what it hopes to achieve. For example, another three peasant women leaders from Mamburao (Ate Sarisa, Ate Norita, Ate Liwa) at the time of fieldwork expressed their feelings of being constrained in their relationship with SP:

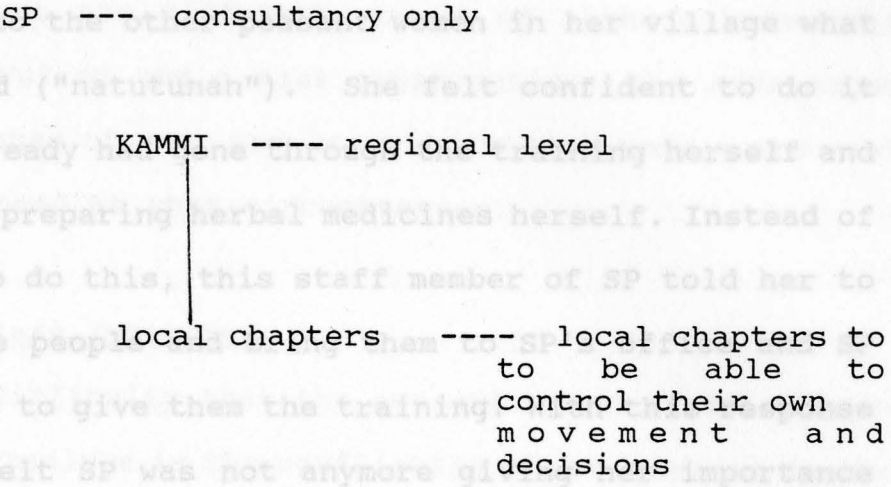
> Why is KAMMI like this, we cannot act freely. Why are we not given free reign? We were made aware, but now we are not weaned. When there is fund given to us, we must act along with them. If it is possible, (SP) may provide funds without acting along with us. Give us the opportunity to act by ourselves, without them. We already have some people we want to give the Basic Orientation Seminar, but we still have to wait for (SP)

> because there will be no funds if they are not part of the action. If we will just be the one to give the seminar, it would be faster.

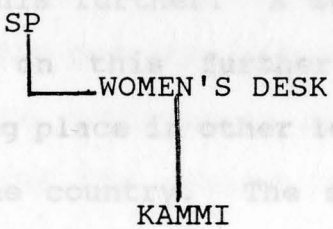
These peasant women leaders feel that they have the capacity to give basic orientation seminars and leadership training in their own area without being dependent on SP for two reasons. One reason is that they already have gone through these seminars. The other reason is they feel they know more the situation and needs of the people in their own area. They said:

> We can already do the lecturing. We can already prepare a syllabus. The three of us are capable of deciding which tasks and topics each of us can handle. We can be the ones to conduct the seminars without being dependent on (SP), because we had experience in teaching religion, and that we already have gone through these seminars ourselves. We know more the situation, happenings, and needs in our own locality. In the training that was conducted in our place, what role was assigned to you? Look, I was only a prayer leader there.

Ate Sarisa, Ate Norita, and Ate Liwa proposed an alternative structural relationship with a support institution. They said that SP's role should just be consultative. KAMMI as a regional federation of peasant women in Mindoro, comprising of local chapters must be able to move and control their own movement and decisions. Their proposal supports further Ate Ara's desire for KAMMI's autonomy that I have mentioned earlier. They (Ate Norita, Ate Sarisa, Ate Liwa) illustrated how this alternative structural relationship should be:



This diagram shows that there is no direct line connecting SP and KAMMI. This is in contrast to the way one of the staff member of SP diagrammed the structural relationship of SP with KAMMI at the time of fieldwork:



Another old-time peasant woman leader (Ate Morina) from Magsaysay also had a story that indicate the need to assess further if SP's relationship with KAMMI does not stifle the initiative of peasant women leaders. She mentioned to Ate Ara that one time she told one of the staff members of SP that she would like to give training on how to prepare herbal medicines in her village. She said that she wanted to do this to share

("ipamahagi") to the other peasant women in her village what she had learned ("natutunan"). She felt confident to do it because she already had gone through the training herself and had experience preparing herbal medicines herself. Instead of allowing her to do this, this staff member of SP told her to just gather the people and bring them to SP's office and SP will be the one to give them the training. With this response she said she felt SP was not anymore giving her importance ("parang wala na akong importansya").

This tension that KAMMI seems to be experiencing in its relationship with SP as a support institution for peasant men and women, is something that I just incidentally got a sense of during my fieldwork, something I did not expect I would find. It was not the focus of my research, so I did not really investigate this further. A separate study might be useful to research on this further and see if similar experiences are taking place in other local chapters of AMIHAN in other parts of the country. The study might be useful, since at least one peasant women in Mindoro had at least expressed her sentiment that she would join KAMMI when it is "already independent from SP". One of the national leaders of AMIHAN also mentioend that in another region of the Philippines where the regional alliance of KMP was linked to a suppport institution, there was also some tension experienced. The study may also look into how other support institutions that other regional chapters of AMIHAN might be

doing -- to see the different models of linkage between a support institution and a mass organization, the advantages and disadvantages of such models, and how such models are most likely to succeed at what circumstances.

Conflicting Class Interests

Another difficulty that the peasant women experience in organizing themselves is the conflicting class interest in the village. As peasant women organize, some members of the rich class, like landlords and usurers ("usurero"), who benefit from the class position of the peasant women, see their class interest threatened. For example, the peasant women from Calintaan spoke during the group interview that landlords try to undermine their organization because they know that when peasants get united their income will be lessened. They explained that when the peasants are united "the rich get less rich", so they create intrigue to divide the organization. Usurers also undermine the peasant organizations. Both the peasant women of Magsaysay and Calintaan say that usurers do not want to lend money to peasants who begin to organize or who join organizations because they fear that when peasants get organized they will demand changes from them (the usurers). They (the usurers) are afraid, the peasant women perceive, that organized peasants will refuse to pay their high interest rates, or will not pay back their loans. This affects the mobilization for membership into the organization,

especially peasants who have not been organized before. In Mamburao, Ate Sarisa talked about a usurer, a store owner, who wanted to take dominant control in a children's day care project that they wanted to set up. This usurer, according to Ate Sarisa, wanted the project to be named after their family name so that they could establish their name in the community. This way they could have control. Ate Norita, also from Mamburao, likewise mentioned that a rich woman ("isang maykaya") discourages people to join their organization because nothing would come of it, except that it would be an added expense to them. There were those who were influenced by her not to join, while others did not believe her and continued to be part of the organization.

Since KAMMI is a class-based organization, it runs in conflict with the class interests of the rich, of those in control of land, of the informal credit systems in the village. Their change agenda threaten those who benefit from their poverty, from their being landless peasants. Their coming together is perceived by the rich as a threat to their power and control over resources. This is a challenge to KAMMI to strengthen further and consolidate their forces as peasant women. Their organization is the source of their power to contend this conflicting class interest. How to strategize their dealing with this contending class interest needs further collective reflection and study. Although their reactionary response to the peasant women's organization is

not as violent as that of the military, (except in cases where they use the military to protect their land), it is a subtle obstacle that needs collective strategizing. It can be a persistent problem in the village level even after the peasant movement succeed in legitimizing on the national level policies that are truly responsive to peasants' interest.

Coordination of Local Chapters

Two povincial leaders of KAMMI expressed their observation on the lack of coordination of local chapters, as well as difficulty in trying to do so. This is due to distance, lack of financial resources to visit the different local chapters, and also because the Provincial Council of KAMMI meets only once a month. Because of lack of coordination, different local chapters do not know exactly what the other chapters are doing. Although there is a provincial assembly held very year for the different local chapters to come together, this does not seem adequate. Although this annual provincial assembly is open to all individual members, in most cases the local chapters send only representatives depending on the availability of funds. It is not unlikely that attendance in these conferences is contigent upon the capacity of the individual members to shoulder their expenses, if their participation is not covered by outside funding or by federation funds.

The absence of full-time peasant women organizers in

KAMMI also affect better coordination of local chapters. For example, the provincial president of KAMMI at the time of my fieldwork felt that she could probably have more time to visit the different local chapters if she were full-time.

Leaders' mobilization capacity are also limited by the lack of organizational fund for transportation, child care, and money they could leave for their children's food when they have to leave home. Some of the provincial leaders who have the overseeing of organizational responsibilities on the provincial level expressed this need.

Lack of Organized Help for KAMMI's Direct Victims of Militarization

One of the difficulties that the peasant women of KAMMI experienced in their struggle is the lack of organized support for members and leaders who are directly victimized by the military. The peasant women who experienced direct military harassment during the 1987 military harassment on KMP, felt that there was not enough organized support for them, although there was individual support from their relatives who are also in the movement. In fact, according to a peasant woman, who was a member of KMP, said that SP suggested that KMP should separate ("ihiwalay") from it, at the time that KMP was being targetted by the military, as a way of institutional self-preservation. Also, while in other regions of the country, there is a Human Rights Desk supported by the Association for Major Religious Superiors or by the Task Force Detainees, in

Mindoro there is no such Human Rights Desk. Hence, while the politics of repression in the Philippines that affect the peasant men, women, children and the whole community of Mindoro have been institutionalized, there is lack of open institutionalized legal support for the organized political struggle of the peasantry, both women and men.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the source of all these problems, difficulties, and tensions does not seem to be arising from their lack of commitment because in fact they are committed, nor from their intellectual capacities because in fact they have a critical sense of their oppression. The source of their problems is the state, the power structure, and the class structure (in which the peasant women occupy a subordinated position -- poor and exploited) that interlock in the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines.

As the women struggle in the context of the broader movement for liberation and change in the Philippines, the source of their tension seems to be the institutionalization that the movement has to some extent achieved, as well as the inadequate resources available for sustaining, expanding, and consolidating peasant women's organization on the local village level. How the peasant women's movement in the Philippines, as carried on by AMIHAN, will handle these internal tensions within the movement will impact on the

future of the peasant women's struggle for change in the Philippines. Further studies are needed to understand adequately the internal tensions within the movement. Understanding them adequately so that they could be honestly dealt with is just as important as understanding the political economy and the national structures and policies that the movement strives to change.

CHAPTER 7

NATIONAL POLITICS: THE POLITICS OF AMIHAN (THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PEASANT WOMEN)

While the previous chapters 5 and 6 focused on the local politics of KAMMI, this chapter will examine the politics of AMIHAN, the National Fedration of Peasant Women, to which KAMMI is federated. Since the peasant women's movement in the Philippines is not just localized, but has a developed a national structure to coordinate various local chapters, it is important to take a look at the politics of the national federation, AMIHAN.

The absence of fundamental change even after the fall of Marcos dictatorship precipitated the formation of AMIHAN in 1986, as a national federation of peasant women's organizations in the Philippines. The goal was to unite the Filipino peasant women on the national level and to facilitate a collective voice for the demands of the peasant women both within the peasant movement, within the women's movement, and the broader movement for change in the Philippines. In this chapter I will focus on the development issues that AMIHAN raises on the national level, how they articulate these issues publically, and its basic principles and strategies of

organizing. I will focus on AMIHAH's National Council since it is composed of representatives from the different provincial and regional chapters.

AMIHAN -- Distinct But Linked

Before the birth of AMIHAN as a national federation of peasant women there was already the existence of a national federation of peasants in the Philippines comprising both men and women peasants. This is the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP, Peasant Movement of the Philippines). KMP was organized in 1985 in response to the need for a strong national peasant organization that would generate a militant political force in advancing the peasant struggle. It is a movement organization with membership ranging from small owner-cultivators, tenants, peasants, women, rural youth, subsistence fisherfolks and farmworkers. As of 1988 KMP had approximately 800,000 membership from the rural sector, and 59 provincial and 6 regional chapters nationwide. Leadership in KMP though is largely male-dominated.

The need to make the role of peasant women in production as well as their role in the peasant struggle more visible and accorded more importance and recognition brought the formation of AMIHAN. Founders of AMIHAN saw that this could be achieved through an independent peasant women's organization that will have an adequate awareness of the particular situation of peasant women and carry their particular demands in the

process of agrarian change. A national AMIHAN leader who played a major role in the founding of AMIHAN as a national federation says:

> We set up a separate peasant women's organization because the participation of women in production is very important. Women hope and we want to make sure that our demand for true land reform is heard. KMP alone cannot do it, peasant women must have participation. Peasant women have particular demands as peasant women. There will be no true land reform if half of the peasantry do not own land. We, the peasant women ourselves will be the ones to carry the issues particular to peasant women).

AMIHAN, therefore, serves as an organizational vehicle for peasant women to push for agrarian change that will benefit the peasantry but at the same time pay attention to the particular situation of peasant women. For example, under the present feudal-patriarchal system of land ownership, title to land is given to the man. To the perspective of AMIHAN, agrarian reform that will not guarantee peasant women the right to own land is not genuine. AMIHAN, therefore, sees that it has an important role in bringing about agrarian change that will at the same time address the patriarchal forms woven into the feudal mode or relations of production. It sees the performance of that particular role within the context of collective action of peasant women.

As a distinct national federation of peasant women, AMIHAN serves as a center for analyzing and raising national issues relevant to true agrarian reform that includes the perspective of peasant women, and other national issues affecting the situation of peasant women. Through its

national conferences, different local chapters are able to meet other peasant women from the different regions of the Philippines and get to know what they are doing. During these conferences national issues are discussed and AMIHAN defines its official stand on these issues after they are critically analyzed. Each AMIHAN representative states her perception about the issue and what she personally thinks the official stand of AMIHAN on the issue should be. Then from the deliberation, the representatives define AMIHAN's official stand on the issue. Sometimes, it is apparent that the representatives to these national conference may not be ready yet to make a stand on the issue. In this case they postpone defining AMIHAN's official stand on the issue until adequate analysis of the issue is done and some prerequisites to be able to make an official stand have been conducted. (An example of this kind of deliberation is discussed in the later part of this chapter).

Though a distinct peasant women's organization sensitive to the particular situation of peasant women, AMIHAN views its struggle as linked to the struggle of the broader peasant movement as represented by KMP. Another AMIHAN national peasant leader describes the relationship that KMP and AMIHAN must have:

> The vision of AMIHAN on KMP... KMP and AMIHAN must have a relationship that can be likened to a marriage relationhip, because both are carrying one issue, and we want that KMP also helps in raising awareness of the situation of peasant women.

AMIHAN sees itself not only linked to the broader peasant national struggle but also to the broader women's movement. It is federated to the broader women's movement represented by GABRIELA, a non-governmental, multi-sectoral, inter-class national coalition of women's organizations in the Philippines. AMIHAN sees its role in GABRIELA as bringing the particular situation of peasant women which comprise the majority of women in the nation. It views that the liberation of this sector of the women population will contribute significantly to the liberation of the whole Filipino women.

AMIHAN has a national representative to the national council of GABRIELA. GABRIELA also supported the founding of AMIHAN. GABRIELA's over-all goal is to bring the woman question in the process of and agenda for national liberation struggle in the Philippines. GABRIELA was initiated in 1984 by 42 women's organizations, about 10,000 individual women, in the period of a heightened resistance against Marcos dictatorship and military rule. GABRIELA was named after a woman revolutionary in the late 19th century who was executed by the Spaniards. At the time of my fieldwork (Summer 1989), GABRIELA had 101 member organizations or 45,000 individual members. Although GABRIELA is a federation of women's organizations from various social classes, of poor to middle class women, the bulk of its mass base, according to one of its national leaders, are peasant women, women workers, and urban poor women. However, most of its national leadership

positions have been occupied by middle-class professional women within the coalition who are politicized and are grassroot-oriented. Within GABRIELA, peasant women have yet to find more visible leadership roles.

The Struggle Within the Struggle

As AMIHAN struggles with structural articulations of gender and class in broader Philippine society, it is also faced with gender and class issue within the peasant movement. For example, there is a struggle among the three peasant women national leaders in making KMP male peasant national leaders be more open and give due importance to issues particular to peasant women. While for AMIHAN national leaders, organizing a separate organization for peasant women and raising gender issues will strengthen the peasant movement as a whole and will broaden the mass base for the peasant movement, national KMP leaders view that raising gender issues will divide the peasant movement. In the perspective of KMP national male peasant leaders, AMIHAN should raise women's issues particular to peasant women within GABRIELA, the National Coalition of Women's Organizations in the Philippines. Although AMIHAN national leaders do not dispute this, they still see the importance of KMP's change agenda, their explanation of Philippine situation and analyses to include the particular ways by which the larger social structures and development policies impact on peasant women. AMIHAN national leaders

want KMP national leaders to understand that "feminism" means "struggling for their rights" as peasant women and that should not be taken with negative connotations. One AMIHAN national peasant leader, Ate Loy, articulated this struggle within the struggle:

> KMP has not yet really carried the issues of peassant women, we have not yet been given importance. Even in speaking in rallies, we are always made last and we are given only a short time, we are almost forgotten. Like here in the Vigil, we have no speaker. One reason is that they still see us as weak leaders. They want us to be under them. There is yet no real support for our actions. Since the start of AMIHAN, KMP has not been very helpful to us the way they have been to other sectors, because their view is that we must ask help from GABRIELA. But in the regional chapters, the relationship is alright between men and women. It is only here in the national level that we are being looked down. But when KMP leaders were in Europe, they told us that the people they met there said that next time they should not come to Europe without a peasant woman with them to speak about the situation of peasant women. Only then, they helped me go to Europe for a speaking tour about the peasant women's situation. Why are we being underestimated by KMP national leaders, but they see us as not yet as articulate as they are about the issues? Feudal attitude is still there. On one occasion, they did not invite us to their National
>
> Council Assembly. I wrote to them and asked them why they did not invite us. Question mark was the answer they gave me. Why is it that in the national level the relationship is not good when in fact it should be in the national level that we must tighten our relationship. They say it is a priority that it should start at the regional chapters. They say AMIHAN is "feminismo". We told them that "feminismo" means struggling for our rights. What is wrong with struggling for your rights? They do not yet understand an orientation on women. We must have a dialogue with KMP to make the relationship closer. Why don't they give us the chance to speak before big groups? You are just coming up the stage, they already tell you to shorten what you will say. Another national AMIHAN leader has the same experience. KMP national leaders look down on us. There is one national leader in KMP who comes to us, he is supportive of us, but he has no power.....because others still have

the view of "who is going to be left at home" and that they will lose force or mass base. But in my view it will strengthen the force or mass base if the local membership is both KMP and AMIHAN.

Despite of this, peasant women keep joining AMIHAN. We are increasing our organizations in the regions. The peasant women in Cebu who have organized themselves want to be linked with AMIHAN.

There are actions of KMP that we do not know about. This affects united action.

While these peasant women struggle within the peasant movement for due recognition of their own analysis and experience of gender and class in the conceptualization of alternative development policies and politics of change, within the women's movement they also have such struggle. For example, there is the desire among national leaders of AMIHAN to assert the peasant women's issue in the women's coalition under the umbrella of GABRIELA, since they argue that majority of women are peasants and that the poverty of rural women and their families is related to urban poverty and prostitution in the U.S. bases in the Philippines. However, since GABRIELA is a multi-sectoral coalition of women's organizations, organizations of women of different social class positions, there is a tendency to subdue the various articulations of class and gender in the lives of poor peasant women, as GABRIELA brings women from different classes and sectors.

Views on Peasant Women and Agricultural Development

While the current government approach to agricultural development is mainly geared towards increasing production

through the use of western technology without changing relations of production, AMIHAN sees changing the feudal and semi-feudal mode of agricultural production fundamental to liberating majority of the peasant women from poverty and exploitation as peasants and as women. They see genuine land reform as one of the major steps towards changing the Philippine feudal and semi-feudal system. AMIHAN states in its official document, "AMIHAN Praymer: Ang Tunay na Reformang Agraryo - Binhi ng Kalayaan ng Kababaihang Magbubukid" (AMIHAN Primer: Genuine Agrarian Reform -Seed of Peasant Women's Liberation):

> Feudalism exploits and oppresses peasant women, the majority of women in the Philippines. Feudalism prevents the progress of women in the economic sphere, their participation in decision-making in social policies, their intellectual and cultural growth. Land reform that will dismantle the feudalist system is a big step towards the liberation of women because it will remove many obstacles to their progress. That is why it is the responsibility of women to push for land reform as part of their liberation - their liberation as peasants and as women (p.67).

AMIHAN though is aware that agrarian change that will simply take peasant women as beneficiaries rather than active political actors will not guarantee benefits to their particular interest as peasant women. Only by becoming collective social actors in the process of agrarian struggle can they bring their particular agenda into the direction of genuine agrarian change. Thus, AMIHAN promotes peasant women's leadership in the process of agrarian change through peasant women's organizations. It asserts that peasant women

must struggle against all forms of obstacles that preclude their full political participation in the process of agrarian transformation. It promotes the feminist development perspective that agrarian reform which pays particular attention to the situation of peasant women will benefit everyone, both men and women. But in AMIHAN's view this cannot be achieved without the full participation and leadership of peasant women.

Agrarian development therefore, in the perspective of AMIHAN, is conceived both as a process and as an end. As a process agrarian development must ensure equal participation of peasant men and women. As an end, it must change the feudal relations of production in a way that will benefit equally peasant men and women by seriously taking into consideration the particular oppression, subordination, and exploitation of peasant women. From the perspective of AMIHAN, without these two aspects, agrarian change is not genuine and it will not have a community-wide impact and will not benefit men either. Only by simultaneosly confronting the gender and class factor that is woven into the feudal relations of production will land reform be genuine. This view of agrarian change relates to the everyday lives of the peasant women and is an articluation of a change agenda that would be responsive both to peasant women as well as men on the national scale.

The Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform: PARCODE as Alternative to CARP

Agrarian development policies of past and present government administration have not been responsive to the needs of the peasantry as a whole, more so of poor peasant women. A current example is the present government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) or Republic Act 6657, which has been widely criticized by KMP, AMIHAN, and other sectors. Their criticisms against CARP led to the formation of the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR). AMIHAN is a founding member of CPAR and was involved in its formation. On June 25-June 26, 1988, CPAR called for a multi-sectoral conference to legislate the People's Agrarian Reform Code in Quezon City, MetroManila. Response came from over 600 delegates representing a broad spectrum of peasant organizations, sectoral groups, political alliances, non-governmental organizations, and agrarian reform advocates. The conference produced the People's Agrarian Reform Code of 1988 (PARCODE) as an alternative to the Aquino government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), which the peasants criticized as "pro-landlord", "puts the burden of land reform on the peasantry", and contains "loopholes" ("mayroon mga butas") favoring landlords. Philippine Peasant Institute (1989) says about CARP (Republic Act 6657):

> It "covers both tenanted and untenanted agricultural lands and reduces retention limit to 5 hectares per landowner with additional 3 hectares per legal heir. However due to the variable retention limit which averages 11 hectares (assuming an average number of two

> legal heirs), the permission of lenghty transitory arrangements such as profit and production sharing and the exemptions from the program until ten years after the effectivity of the law of private commercial agricultural farms such as livestock and poultry, aquaculture, vegetable and flower, cacao, coffee and rubber plantations, a mere 10 percent of the total farm lands is available for distribution.
>
> Moreover, a provision contained in the law allows for anticipatory transfer of titles of land in excess of the retention limit 3 months after the effectivity of the law. Hence, unless a landowner chooses to voluntarily give up his land, this law contains no clear meassures how landlords can be compelled to participate in the program (p. 6).

Comparing CARP with other land reform programs in Asia, Philippine Peasant Institute (1989) further says:

> The high retention limit allowed landowners in R.A. 6657 is not found in other successful land reform programs, not even in South Korea where the law favored the landowners.
>
> Another disadvantage which the Philippine reform has is the long period of implementation. Ten years had been projected by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) after which more years will be consumed due to the deferment period given commercial farms....Where much controversy arises is the terms of payment provided in R.A. 6657. Valuation of land depends largely on its market value rather than on its productivity, a price extremely favorable to the landowner, unlike in successful agrarian reform programs in Asia where productivity of land was a major factor in its valuation (p. 7).

CARP, formulated by the Philippine Congress which is largely dominated by landlords, and PARCODE, formulated by people's organizations, have basic differences. My analysis show that while both legislative documents talk about "agrarian reform", they differ in their conceptualization of it. In the following I examine the basic differences in CARP and PARCODE to show in what way PARCODE is an alternative to

CARP.

Alternative Proposals on Agrarian Reform in PARCODE vs. CARP

1. Land to the tiller. Unlike CARP wherein the basic principle of land distribution is just compensation for the landlord on the basis of the current market value of his land , PARCODE fundamental principle of agrarian reform is "land to the tiller". The "land to the tiller" principle in PARCODE essentially means that only those who can till the land directly have the right to own land. Those who chose to retain land must make the land productive directly by themselves. No tenancy relationship will be allowed in lands retained by landowners within his retention rights. PARCODE chapter 1, Section 3 on "Retention Limits" states:

> Based on the principle of owner cultivatorship, no person, family, corporation and/or association (except farmers'and fisherfolks' cooperatives or associations) may own/retain directly or indirectly any agricultural land except that which s/he is cultivating directly [italics mine]. The land retained by such person or family shall vary according to factors governing a viable family-size farm, such as commodity produced, terrain, infrastructure, soil fertility, and others as determined by the local People's Agrarian Reform Council (PARCON) but in no case shall retention exceed five (5) years from the effectivity of this act.
>
> The right of the tiller to own the lands which they till shall be superior to the retention right of the landowner, and tenancy relationship shall not be permitted in the retained landholding [italics mine].
>
> Any sale, disposition, lease, management contract or transfer of possession of private lands covered by this law, executed after February 2, 1987 by the landowner, shall be null and void, unless made in favor of qualified beneficiaries as defined in Section 6 hereof.
>
> No sale, disposition, lease, management contract or transfer of possession of private lands executed by the

> original landowner prior to February 2, 1987 shall be considered valid unless it has been registered with the Government prior to such a date or unless said transaction is not inconsistent with any provision of this act.

PARCODE's basic principle of "land to the tiller", therefore fundamentally aims at dismantling the feudal relations of agricultural production that result to the unjust and unequitable system of land ownership and use. CARP does not guarantee to effect this fundamental change since it follows the principle of "voluntary land transfer" on the part of landowners and the principle of "voluntary offer to sell" on the part of the government to purchase lands for distribution to peasants. Executive Order No. 229 "Providing the Mechanisms for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program", Chapter III, on Land Transfer, Utilization and Sharing, states:

> Section 8. Voluntary Land Transfer. Landowners whose lands are subject to redistribution under this Order have the option of entering into a <u>voluntary agreement for direct transfer of their lands</u> [italics mine] to beneficiaries, under terms and conditions acceptable to both parties and subject to the approval of the DAR...
> Section 9. Voluntary Offer to Sell. The government shall purchase all agricultural lands it deems productive and suitable to farmer cultivation <u>voluntarily offered for sale</u> [italics mine] to it at a valuation determined in accordance with Section 6 . Such transactions shall be exempt from the payment of capital gains tax and other taxes and fees.

2. <u>Inclusion into land reform what is exempted in CARP such as military reservations and U.S. military bases</u>. To make agrarian reform truly comprehensive, PARCODE includes lands other than agricultural lands that can be put into

productive use such as "military reservations", idle and abandoned arable lands "including church and school owned lands", "all lands and water resources which are now effectively under the control of the U.S. Military bases", and "all other agricultural lands which have been converted to non-agricultural uses" to evade provisions of land reform (PARCODE, Chapter 1, Section 2). CARP exempts these lands (Section 3, Executive Order No.229). PARCODE's inclusion of lands used by military reservations reflects the analysis that peasants cannot effectively struggle for genuine land reform under a militarized government. Militarization subverts fundamental agrarian change. A comprehensive agrarian program must include its dismantling and confront the class interest that militarism serves. PARCODE therefore confronts directly the possibility of CARP being used as part of the government's strategy of Low Intensity Conflict. It is part of Low Intensity Conflict strategy to give in to some reforms or concessions while at the same time intensifying militarization. Involving the military in the implementation of these concessions or reforms through civic action is a way to construct a liberal facade for the government and a benign image for the Armed Forces. In CARP the Armed Forces of the Philippines and military government agencies may be involved in the implementation of land reform (Section 5, d and m, of Executive Order No.129-A "Modifying Executive Order No.129 Reorganizing and Strengthening Department of Agrarian Reform

and for Other Purposes").

PARCODE's inclusion of the U.S. Military bases into agrarian change indicates a view that development in the Philippines must promote the Filipino people's national sovereignty. The presence of the U.S. military bases in the Philippines has fortified the continuing U.S. interventionism in Philippine internal political and economic affairs. As an extension of the U.S. imperial state, its presence was imposed as a condition for the granting of independence from direct U.S. colonial rule in 1946. The U.S. military bases have been used to suppress peasant revolt for land and fundamental structural change in Philippine political economy (Simbulan 1985, 170). It is therefore logical that a comprehensive agrarian reform should include its expulsion.

3. Multinational corporations and Filipino control of Philippine political economy. While CARP has left the important issue of multinational corporations and its major control of Philippine political economy unaddressed, PARCODE has identified it as an issue of special concern. Under PARCODE transnational corporations' significant control of Philippine political economy is greatly reduced. Filipino control of these corporations will be based on the principle of collective ownership and management of the direct producers. PARCODE Chapter III, Section 15, no. 1, "Special Concerns" states:

> All lands currently under the control of transnational corporations must revert back to Filipinos, in a period

of two years in accordance with Sec. 9, and their ownership and management transferred collectively to the direct producers. All improvements found in the land like factories must also be given to the beneficiaries.

4. Peasants' political will and collective participation. Unlike CARP, PARCODE views that genuine comprehensive agrarian change must not simply take peasants as passive beneficiaries, but rather as active collective political actors who must play a major role in all levels of decison-making and policy implementation. Their initiatives towards "people's control and ownership of the production and marketing of commercial farm inputs" must be legitimized and accorded government support (PARCODE Chapter III, Section 13, m., Chapter II, Section 6). The formation of peasant collectives, such as cooperatives and peasant organizations, must go hand in hand with land distribution since it is these organizations that will serve as vehicles for collective participation of peasants in agrarian reform (PARCODE Chapter III, Section 10). Hence, PARCODE views that it is the political empowerment of peasants that will guarantee their access to the economic benefits of agrarian transformation.

5. Equal rights for rural women. CARP is gender-blind. It has made peasant women invisible. Even in its language it has made peasant women non-existent. When it refers to a peasant, it refers to the person as "he". Whereas in PARCODE, peasant women exist visibly. PARCODE guarantees that "all women members of the agricultural force" must be "assured equal rights with men to ownership of the land, equal shares

of the farm's produce", and equal representation in "decision-making bodies" (Chapter III, Section 15, no.5). In the distribution of land to rural women, priority is given to "widows, single women parents, abandoned women, single women heads of the family" (Chapter II, Section 7).

6. Agrarian reform funding and foreign debt. Funding for CARP depends largely on foreign debt, thus putting the Philippines further into the debt trap it is now in. The Philippines accumulates a foreign debt at a rate of approximately more than $1 billion yearly. Its foreign debt of $26 billion dollars in 1986 is expected to rise to $33 billion in 1993. Most of foreign lending for CARP goes to "support services" such as loans for purchase of foreign agro-chemical inputs, like fertilizers and pesticides, purchase of grains and post-harvest technology -- products of transnational corporations. Major lenders for CARP are the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, U.S. AID (Research and Policy Studies Desk, Philippine Peasant Institute:1989). With the structural adjustments IMF and the World Bank put as conditions for loans, CARP entrenches the control of the Philippine political economy by multi-lateral development aid agencies. Already reflected in CARP is the privatization scheme, one of the major conditions required by IMF loans. This privatization scheme in CARP takes the specific form of selling public sector enterprises to private business as one of the ways to raise funds for CARP and as a form of

incentives for landlords to invest in industrial ventures in a free enterprise economic arrangement (Proclamation No.131,"Instituting a Comprehenssive Agrarian Reform Program", Section 8; Executive Order No. 229, "Improving the Mechanisms for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarain Reform Program", Sec. 6). PARCODE, on the other hand, confronts clearly the issue of foreign debt. Funding for agrarian reform shall be "sourced primarily from the amount that shall be saved by the national government in the event that debt services be reduced from its present level, or a moratorium on or repudiation of debts be declared" and "from a decrease in the budget for national defense" and other use of local resources (Chapter VI, Section 20). Hence, PARCODE reflects the view that agricultural development and agrarian change must lead to self-reliance, rather than perpetuate dependency that puts the Philippine political economy under external control.

7. Legitimation of land occupations as peasants' initiative to implement agrarian reform. Organized peasants in rural areas, such as Mindoro (as discussed in chapter 5), Laguna, Negroes and throughout the country have used the strategy of "land occupation" to make idle lands productive. They enter idle lands and while occupying them they farm. This is their grassroot initiative to implement land reform against government inaction. CARP has defined sanctions against such initiatives: it "permanently disqualifies"

peasants involved in land occupations from being beneficiaries of land reform and takes away their right to own land (Executive Order No. 229, Chapter VI, Section 22). Whereas, PARCODE safeguards and legitimizes this peasant initiative: "The occupation of private or public lands prior to the effectivity of this order shall not be a bar to being a beneficiary to this program"(Chapter II, Section 7). CARP's sanction against land occupation provides the basis for the peasants' criticism that the government's land reform is part of Low Intensity Conflict or counter-insurgency strategy.

In the final analysis, how PARCODE differs from CARP shows that there is an ideological and organizational resistance as well as an alternative to the current ideology and strategy of agricultural development in the Philippines. PARCODE, as a people's initiative on grassroot legislation and policy-making, reflects the capability of Filipino peasant women and men to formulate alternative legislation to existing development policies. The social formation of the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR), that gave birth to PARCODE, indicates that the grassroot organizations comprising it have the capability to mobilize a mechanism for meaningful participation in policy-making. CPAR conducted signature campaign as pressure for the Aquino government to recognize PARCODE. AMIHAN for example facilitated petition signing among its chapters for PARCODE to be incorporated into the government's development agenda. Yet, a sincere response from

the government to legitimize PARCODE remains to be seen.

The basic differences in PARCODE and CARP also indicate the influence of the class character of policy-making bodies on the development policies they define. The policy-making body that produced CARP was dominated by politicians who come from the landed class; hence, it sought to protect its class interest. The policy-making body that produced PARCODE comes from the ranks of the working class and from the broad alliance of organizations seeking for social justice in the Philippines. Hence, PARCODE contains the change agenda that represent the interest of the poor majority. It attempts to bring fundamental change in the power structures that now control the nature of agricultural development in the Philippines today that CARP seeks to preserve under the guise of reform and concessions.

Lastly, PARCODE's inclusion of the peasant women's change agenda and CARP's lack of it shows how the gender and class composition of policy-making bodies can influence its sensitivity to the particular situation of peasant women as peasants and as women. Of the 204 senators in the Philippine senate only two are women, and these two did not carry the peasant women's perspective into CARP because they are landlords themselves. AMIHAN's influence in the formulation of PARCODE indicates the importance of the collective participation of peasant women in defining agricultural development policies. As long as the legitimated

policy-making bodies in the Philippines continue to exclude non-governmental peasant women's organizations in the formulation of state policies, it cannot adequately represent the particular needs of the peasant women.

AMIHAN's Alternative Agenda of Agrarian Reform

Continuing education on women and agrarian reform. AMIHAN gives importance for continuing education on women and agrarian reform. It recognizes that although it has reached quite a good number of peasant women in its two year of existence, there is still the need to expand its education on the issue. In its National Council convention in July 1989 in Quezon City, Manila, delegates of the different chapters of AMIHAN received and studied a recent AMIHAN primer on genuine agrarian reform, entitled "AMIHAN Praymer - Ang Tunay na Reformang Agrario: Binhi ng Kalayaan ng Kababaihang Magbubukid" (AMIHAN Primer - Genuine Agrarian Reform: Seed for Peasant Women's Liberation). They brought copies of the primer when they got back to their respective chapters to be used in their local education program or activities. The primer contains 4 major sections, each containing with komik-style illustrations. The first section analyzes why the feudal and semi-feudal system is the basic problem of peasant women, its historical roots, and how it particularly oppresses peasant women. The second section analyzes why the implementation of genuine land reform is the basic solution

to changing the feudal and semi-feudal system, and describes the objectives of a true land reform based on the perspective of women. The third section sets forth the essentials of land reform that peasant women must struggle for based on a feminist perspective. And the fourth section explains why the whole Filipino women's movement must support the struggle ("pakikibaka") of peasant women for true land reform.

AMIHAN's alternative program of land reform. Since the need for genuine land reform is a national issue that is affecting the whole peasantry of men and women, AMIHAN has formulated an alternative program of land reform that is different from the Aquino government's CARP. AMIHAN's alternative program of land reform is comprehensive and views it not as genderless as CARP. It does not only confront the issue of gender equality in the access to the primary resource of land and its produce, but also the issue of political empowerment of peasant women through collective social formations. AMIHAN sees the interjection of ownership and control of agricultural resources and organizational empowerment of women in the process of agrarian reform crucial to the conception and implementation of agrarian change. This view is reflected, for example, in "AMIHAN Praymer". First, AMIHAN views that it is free land redistribution to peasant women and men as couples (legally married or not) or as single female heads of families that will basically end the feudal exploitation of peasant women. Free distribution of land

equally to men and women will not put the burden of land reform to the peasants' capacity to pay land amortization, hence it will guarantee an end to the feudal relations of production. In AMIHAN's perspective free distribution of land equally to peasant men and women is just and fair, because the peasants have already paid for it through the exploitation of their labor feudal relations have long subjected them (AMIHAN Praymer, p. 28). But AMIHAN is aware that there is patriarchy in the control of decisions on land and its produce. Hence, it views that along with ownership of land, peasant women must have equal decision-making power on the land titled to couples (AMIHAN Praymer, p.28). Secondly, free land distribution, AMIHAN stresses, must be sensitive to the fact that there are female-headed peasant households either because they are widows, abandoned, or separated. They must be given priority in the free distribution of land that could be made possible in the early phase of agrarian change (AMIHAN Praymer, p.35). Thirdly, along with peasant women's access to resources, there must be the mechanism for women to safeguard their benefits from free land distribution. Peasant women can create that mechanism through the formation of agricultural cooperatives that will collectivize not only ownership but also control over decisions on land. These collectives must provide education for women so they acquire the knowledge and the skills needed to fully participate in collective decision-making and leadership in the exercise of

their new-found ownership and control rights (AMIHAN Praymer, p.36). However, AMIHAN is conscious of the fact that patriarchial decision-making structure in the family limits women's full participation in community collective action. So that along with community collectivization of decisions on land must go a democratization of the decision-making in the family, that accord peasant women an equal place (AMIHAN Praymer, p.36). But certain individual family decisions over distributed land does not take precedence over the collective decisions of peasant organizations over it. For example, if a peasant couple cannot anymore till directly the land distributed to them, the decision on what to do with the land must be deliberated upon by the peasant cooperative to which they belong. The basis of collective decision must upheld the principle that distributed lands cannot be sold or mortgage by the individual beneficiaries, but they can return the land to the peasant cooperatives who will arrive at a collective decision over it (AMIHAN Praymer, p.37). Thus, in AMIHAN's view, there is the breaking away from the concept of land as a private property to a concept of land as a community property. This perspective strikes at the very essence of the feudal concept of land: the concentration and privatization of land and decisions over it among a few.

Aware of the significant impact of usury on the lives of peasant women, AMIHAN's ideology of genuine land reform also includes eventual dismantling of the system of usury. This

could be done through the following: a) promotion of credit cooperatives, b) equal access of peasant women to formal credit systems, c) increasing government subsidy on farm production, d) provisioning that peasant cooperatives, including women's cooperatives, have adequate access to formal credit systems, e) cancellation of old debts, f) empowering peasant organizations to set up fair rules to regulate the informal credit system of usury, g) using alternative farm inputs that do not result to high cost of production or by not patronizing government programs that bind peasants into debt because they force peasants to use particular technologies and, h) by encouraging peasants to save (AMIHAN Praymer, pp.50-51).

AMIHAN views that usury is a result of the feudal mode of production and of the commercialization of agriculture with foreign corporations having monopoly control of the prices of the resources of farm production such as fertilizers, seed varieties, machinery, and pesticides. AMIHAN sees that usury will end when peasants' family income increases as a result of free land distribution, farmers' cooperatives, and their control of agricultural production and marketing. While it may take time to totally eradicate usury, AMIHAN believes certain regulatory steps could already be taken. Among them are: 1) peg the annual interest of government banks at 12% and open up credit facilities for peasants at low interest rates; 2) lower the current interest rates of local creditors to 30%;

3) reassess current debts based on the peasants' ability to pay (AMIHAN Praymer, pp.47-50).

AMIHAN's alternative program of land reform also calls for an end to other feudal forms of exploitation peasant women experience because they are women: 1) Women's free domestic service in the landlords' or usurers' household as payment for debts must be stopped. This will prevent sexual abuse of women while in the domestic service of the landlord; 2) Empower peasant women's organizations to collectively confront landlords' sexual abuses by providing the support systems needed for peasant women to bring such cases in the open (AMIHAN Praymer, p.54). Often times in the Philippines victims of sexual abuse do not go public because of fear or shame. In AMIHAN's view sexual abuses arising from feudal relations must be treated as a public concern.

AMIHAN is realistic enough to anticipate that free land distribution to the tillers may not be completed immediately and will need a transition period. Conditions they see may affect the rate of land distribution are the following: a) the level of organization and consolidation of peasant organizations, b) if it becomes necessary that big landholdings should be given priority in the distribution of land, c) if the system for payment for landlords is not yet settled. If this happens, during this transition period, some reforms must already be done, like: a) 50% reduction of land rent from its current rate, or reduce to 10% of the

harvest after all production expenses are deducted, b) reduction of rent of farm animals and machineries on the rate peasant organizations would agree on, c) setting up of provisions in which peasants will not be made to pay land rent in cases where destruction from military operations and natural calamities is at least 20% of the expected harvest (AMIHAN Praymer, pp.44-46). These reforms can result to some immediate amelioration of the poverty and extremely exploitative economic relations in the everyday lives of peasant women as well as men. Hence, as in KAMMI's local politics, AMIHAN, on the national level, combines both reforms and radical change in its concept of agrarian development. They do not see this two levels of change as contradictory: reforms can serve as transition towards more radical change.

Although free distribution of land to the tiller is basic in AMIHAN's concept of land reform, it holds that there are situations when land to be distributed must be paid. In such cases the following are the conditions on which to base the arrangement for the purchase of land: 1) Non-despotic and non-abusive landlords will be paid for their land and will be allowed to retain some lands, but they should till these lands themselves and can not use tenants to till the land for them; 2) rich peasants with excess lands will be required to sell those lands to the government for distribution to other landless peasants; 3) landed farmers who placed their lands within the peasant cooperative system will be allowed to own

some lands like the non-despotic and non-abusive landlords; 4) in general selective compensation will be used in determining the price of land that will be placed under land reform (AMIHAN Praymer, pp.42-43).

AMIHAN's alternative program of land reform also addresses the issue of economic imperialism in the form of external control of Philippine political economy by transnational corporations. Contrary to CARP, AMIHAN supports PARCODE's provision that plantations owned and controlled by foreign corporations must be nationalized and peasants who lost their lands to agribusiness transnationals through landgrabbing must get back their lands, or be compensated justly.

AMIHAN proposes that agricultural corporations acquired by Marcos and his cronies through force, deceit and other illicit means must be confiscated and may be transformed into farm cooperatives or must be placed under state ownership and control. In AMIHAN's view corporate farms and plantations that may not be covered by free land distribution must set aside 20% of their landholdings for their farm workers to use for their subsistence production and family needs. In coconut plantation, intercropping for peasants' subsistence must be done, while in sugar, pineapple, and coffee plantations and others, 20% of land must be placed under the control of agricultural workers' union (AMIHAN Praymer, p.40). It looks here that AMIHAN allows for the continuance of the existing

export crop production, but that it must be combined with subsistence production that could respond to the local needs of the agricultural workers and of the local market. This way cash crop agricultural workers can have something to fall back on if a slump in the world market occurs. At present the government's agricultural development policy has no such provision; for example, the sugar farm workers and their families suffered from hunger when the demand for sugar in the world market decreased.

AMIHAN believes that agricultural workers' rights in corporate farms must be safeguared by strong unionization of both regular and seasonal workers. Unions for women agricultural workers must be promoted. Unions must struggle for workers' rights that will sufficiently improve their living and working conditions. AMIHAN views the following as consisting basic agricultural workers' rights : 1) work security for all farm workers and permanent work for seasonal workers; 2) just wage and just pay for overtime work and for tedious tasks; 3) decent housing for workers; 4) free health care; 5) vacation leave, sick leave, maternity and paternity leave; 6) free day care for the children of agricultural workers, and educational benefits for them; 7) accidental and death benefits; 8) right to inspect the books of farm corporations to see their real financial situation; 9) right to free acquisition of corporate lands which workers' unions and their families can use to augment their daily needs

(AMIHAN Praymer, pp.61-62). In the present land reform program of the government, these rights are not addressed.

AMIHAN's alternative land reform program also promotes the unionization of contractual agricultural workers who do not work directly with corporate farms or in large plantations of big landlords. They must also organize into unions to protect themselves from exploitative dealings of contractors and recruiters. They must assert for their right to just wage and benefits (AMIHAN Praymer, p.63).

AMIHAN views genuine land reform as integrated with other changes in other sector of the economy, such as national industrialization. It states: "It is necessary that national industrialization must take place simultaneously with genuine land reform" (AMIHAN Praymer, p.20). National industrialization however, AMIHAN asserts, must be sensitive to the particular situation of peasant women so that it results to their progress. Technology must be appropriate for women in lightening their work load, and farm machineries must be made such that they can be used both by peasant men and women in production.

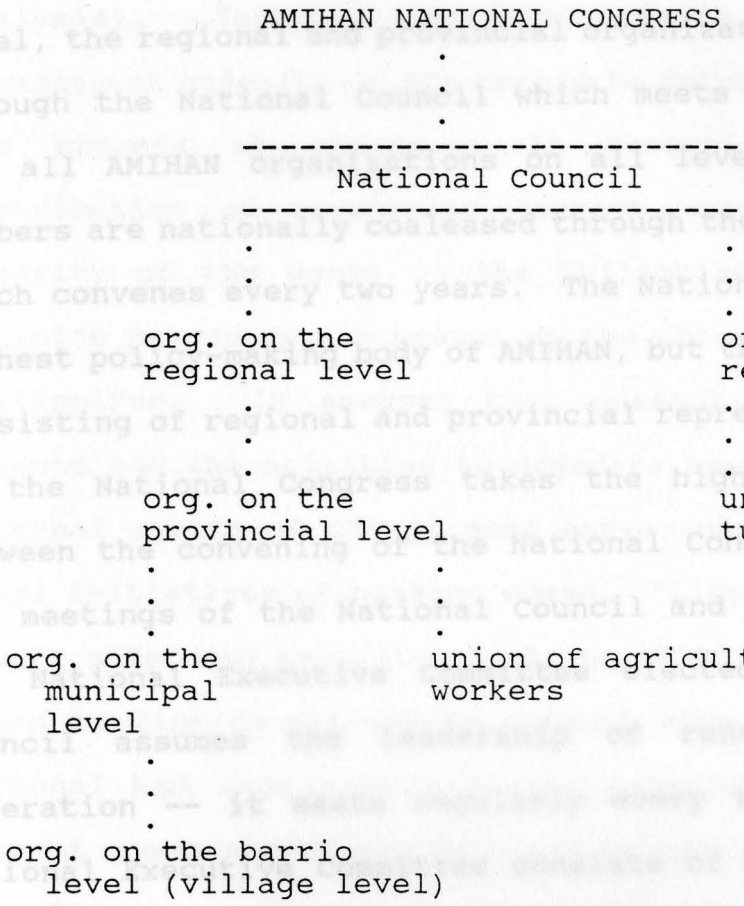
AMIHAN views that genuine land reform must also go along with improvement of social services. For example, land taxes that will be collected after successful land reform shall revert back to the communities in the form of increased social services, such as health services, schools in the villages, day care services and other services that will lighten women's

work at home (AMIHAN Praymer, p.37).

Hence, overall, AMIHAN's program and ideology of land reform is comprehensive, integrated, redistributive and feminist. It is comprehensive because it addresses local, national and international issues that are excluded in development policies, such as CARP, currently legitimated by the Philippine government. It is integrated because it is conceived within the context of related changes in the social political economy. It is redistributive because it basically aims at redistributing resources and power from where it is presently concentrated to the direct producers of agricultural wealth. It is feminist because in the redistributive change process it asserts that peasant women must be duly recognized, given equal representa- tion, participation in all areas of decision-making, and that it must result to gender equality in access to and control of basic economic resources and political decisions.

Organization as a Mechanism for Change and Empowerment

AMIHAN's organizational structure. As in KAMMI, AMIHAN's basic mechanism in pushing for its agenda for change is organization. AMIHAN promotes organization on all levels: from the barrio (village) level, to the municipal, to the provincial, to the regional, to the national level. Thus, AMIHAN's organizational structure looks like this:



There can be as many regional, provincial, municipal, barrio levels of organizations as there are many of those political units in the Philippines. AMIHAN's basic unit of organization is the barrio (village) chapter, consisting usually of 20-30 individual members. The barrio (village) chapters are federated into a municipal level of organization consisting of at least 3 barrio chapters. The municipal level organizations are then federated into the provincial level organizations consisting of at least 3 municipal level organizations. The provincial level organizations federate into the regional level organizations. On the national

level, the regional and provincial organizations are federated through the National Council which meets every six months. And all AMIHAN organizations on all levels and individual members are nationally coaleased through the National Congress which convenes every two years. The National Congress is the highest policy-making body of AMIHAN, but the National Council consisting of regional and provincial representatives elected by the National Congress takes the highest leadership in between the convening of the National Congress. In between the meetings of the National Council and National Congress, the National Executive Committee elected by the National Council assumes the leadership of running the national Federation -- it meets regularly every three months. The National Executive Committee consists of six members -- the national president, vice-national president, national secretary, vice-national secretary, treasurer, and public relations officer. The day to day national administration of AMIHAN is done by the national office seated in Manila -- manned at the time of my fieldwork by 3 full-time national peasant women leaders and staff members who are not necessarily peasants but are college-educated women who support the peasant women's struggle.

AMIHAN's basic principles of organizing. As an organization for change, AMIHAN integrates 3 basic principles of organizing: "linyang masa"(mass line), "linyang makauri"(class line), "panlipunang pagsisiyasat" (social

analysis). "Linyang masa" puts faith and trust in the capacity of majority of the people to determine the agenda and the process of change. It recognizes the important contribution of organizing peasant women, which comprise majority of the women in the Philippines and half of the Filipino peasantry, in hastening the process of change in the Philippines. It assumes that peasant women possess the talents and the abilities to organize among their own ranks. External agents of change must serve only as support to the local initiatives of peasant women. "Linyang masa" addresses issues affecting majority of the peasantry and of the peasant women by linking situations peasant women experience on the personal and local level to the national situation of the peasant women and of the majority of the Filipino people.

"Linyang makauri" is siding with the most oppressed and exploited class in rural society. It is being aware of the different rural classes and their different class interests. AMIHAN identifies the rural class structure based on their position in the feudal mode of production as consisting of the following: "panginoon maylupa" (the big landlords), "mayamang magsasaka" (rich peasants), "panggitnang magsasaka" (middle peasants), "maralitang magsasaka" (poor peasants), and "manggagawang bukid" (agricultural workers). The "panginoon maylupa" owns large tracts of lands and other means of production, does not till the land, and lives on the labor of others. The "mayamang magsasaka" usually owns land more than

what he/she needs and other resources for production, hires agricultural laborers but does not usually rent out his/her own labor power because he/she also tills the land. The "panggitnang magsasaka" usually owns land just enough for his/her families' needs and may have other resources for production, sometimes rent out their own labor power and hire the labor power of others. The "maralitang magsasaka" are landless or near-landless peasants whose labor does not bring adequate needs for themselves and their families. They usually work as tenants of landlords, or hire out their labor because what they earn is insufficient for them, and usually does not have or hardly have other resources of production. Some of them may have small amount of land but extremely inadequate for their daily needs. The "manggagawang bukid" are landless agricultural workers and do not own any farm implements. Their livelihood depends on being hired by other peasants or by the "panginoon maylupa". Some of them may be seasonal workers. AMIHAN puts empahsis in organizing the "maralitang magsasaka" and "manggagawang bukid" of peasant women and stresses their expansion and consolidation in order that they can have organized power in determining the change agenda that would benefit them most. However, AMIHAN does not entirely discount the possibility of getting the friendship and alliance of women from the ranks of the "panggitnang magsasaka", "mayamang magsasaka" or even women from the ranks of the "panginoong maylupa" so that they would

not be antagonistic to the struggles of the poor peasantry. But their support or alliance should not overpower the control over the change agenda AMIHAN asserts in favor of the "maralitang magbubukid" and the "manggagawang bukid". By following the "linyang makauri" principle of organizing, AMIHAN recognizes that in the peasant women struggle it has also to confront the issue of class and the class differences among women. Thus, AMIHAN attempts at organizing peasant women on the basis of class and gender. This lends support to the theory that in the peasant women's struggle gender interjects with class. This is also reflected in the local politics of KAMMI.

The "panlipunang pagsisiyasat" actually involves integrating some of the tools of research into the process of organizing. Usually it combines document analysis, individual informal interviews, group interviews (sometimes called consultation), and participant observation. The main objective of the "panlipunang pagsisiyasat" is for the organizers to understand the concrete conditions of the peasant women who are being organized as well as for the peasant women who are coming together to understand their common concrete situation and their communities. Through this process they are able to identify appropriate steps in organizing, consciousness-raising, and mobilizing of the peasant women and the whole community. It also helps organizers identify resources and support systems available

in the community that could be tapped for their organizational purposes. The process of "panlipunang pagsisiyasat" takes place all throughout the different phases of organizing -- from village to national formations. It is an on-going process, not a one-shot task. One of the common form of "panlipunang pagsisisyasat" that the national leaders of AMIHAN do is in the holding of consultations with local provincial and regional chapters, in which representatives of village local chapters are brought together to discuss their problems, needs, concerns, and assessments of their work. Sometimes, national leaders also visit some local chapters who may be experiencing problems or when they need support in their formative stage. During the bi-annual meetings of the National Council, representatives of local chapters are also able to share an assessment of their local chapters and share some of their problems and needs.

AMIHAN's basic strategies of organizing. As in the politics of KAMMI, AMIHAN generally combines 2 basic approaches to organizing: "pag-oorganisa mula baba pataas" (organizing from bottom to top) and "pag-oorganisa mula taas pababa" (organizing from top to bottom). "Organizing from bottom to top" strategy starts with organizing first barrio (village) chapters before they are federated into municipal or provincial level organizations. AMIHAN, as a national federation, encourages first the confederation of local village chapters on the provincial level before they can be

formally linked to AMIHAN, in which case they now formally send a provincial representative to the AMIHAN National Council which meets every six months. When provincial chapters are already organized, AMIHAN, encourages their formation into regional federations. AMIHAN provides incentives to regional federations by providing some funds for their regional congress. As regional federations they can now send a regional representative to the National Council. "Organizing from top to bottom" strategy usually begins with the formation of a provincial ad-hoc committee who facilitates the formation of village chapters and municipal chapters. AMIHAN emphasizes "organizing from bottom to top" strategy. It uses "top to bottom" strategy only where it is most appropriate and perceived as the most effective in certain situations. Both of these strategies are important in building an organized mass base for the peasant movement on the local level as well as for the continual expansion and coordination of local, provincial, and regional groups on the national level. Without the building of provincial and regional federations national coordination would be difficult, and without beginning from the village social formation there would be no base for national organizational structures. AMIHAN identifies itself as a mass organization (MO), hence, it considers the formation of national structures with local roots important.

In both strategies and in all levels of organizing AMIHAN

usually begins first with the formation of an ad-hoc committee who elects at least 3 peasant women leaders president, secretary and treasurer) who will also serve as ad-hoc officials. The ad-hoc committee is responsible in preparing towards the formation of the formal chapter that will be recognized with a legal status. This preparation usually involves a) the expansion of membership, b) the setting up of regular meetings, c) regular communication and consultation with the AMIHAN organizer, d) the preliminary preparation of organizational papers (such as draft of constitution and by-laws, general program of action) that would be needed in the formal assembly, e) preparation of agenda for meetings, f) and analysis of the peasant women situation. The ad-hoc stage of the formation of a chapter is very important and is given some time before the formalization of the organization is set. An ad-hoc formation indicates readiness for formalization when it has achieved the minimum prerequisites, such as: 1) it has been able to at least sustain regular meetings, 2) it has at least 3 people who can accept responsibilities of formal leadership, 3) it has at least 20-30 members who have expressed interest in being members of the organization, 4) these members have at least undergone basic orientation on the local and national situation of peasant women, on the over-all program of AMIHAN, responsibilities and rights of members and leaders, and how to choose leaders for the organization based on a

criteria. AMIHAN propagates the following criteria for electing leaders: a) The candidate must have a strong principle to work for the interest of peasant women, b) she is respected in the community because she has a good record or reputation both in her family and community life, not necessarily respect that is traditionaly based on wealth and high education, c) she must have the capacity and ability to work cooperatively with others, d) she is open to learning, e) diligent and persistent in doing the tasks that falls under her responsibilities and, f) is one of the "pinakamahirap" (poorest) peasant women in her community or village. The setting up of this criteria helps to break away from the traditional patronage politics in the Philippines where politicians are elected on the basis of wealth and capacity to give personal immediate economic rewards to the voters in the form of vote-buying or patronage jobs.

AMIHAN considers the formalization of an ad-hoc formation just the beginning phase of real organizing. The process of strengthening and consolidating the organization remains a long-term challenge. This involves a continued consciousness-raising, sustaining action, and mobilization of peasant women. In sustaining the life of a formalized organization AMIHAN sees the accomplishment of four major tasks as crucial: a) "pagpupulong" (regularizing meetings), b) "edukasyon" (education), c) "pagsasanay" (training), d) "mobilisasyon" (mobilization). I discuss each of these in the following.

Setting up a system of regularizing meetings is the first step necessary to achieve collective planning, collective assessment of problems and evaluation of work done. Meetings can take different levels -- meetings involving all members of the organization, meetings of the committee of leaders, meetings of working committees. In between meetings AMIHAN encourages consultations or talking to members of the organization in order for working committees to get a sense of the situation of the members or the organization.

Like KAMMI, AMIHAN sees education and study as very important in sustaining the commitment of the members and leaders. Its goal is to raise the consciousness of peasant women towards active involvement in the activities and struggles of the organization. Among the different types of education or study that AMIHAN promotes are: education on organizing, education on women, education on the problems and struggles of peasants, education on national and particular issues. For its members, AMIHAN provides basic education program that ordinarily comprise the following: a) basic orientation -- the goal is to provide a general situationer about the peasant masses and the particular situation of peasant women and to introduce AMIHAN as a national federation of peasant women, its goals and program of action; b) general orientation on the women's liberation movement; c) guide on organizing; d) guide on leadership. There are also educational sessions focused on particular issues and current

events such as, on land reform, U.S. military bases in the Philippines, total war and low-intensity conflict, and debt crisis.

For the successful implementation of organizational projects, AMIHAN sees the important role of training peasant leaders and members to do certain specific organizational tasks such as how to conduct a study session, how to speak in public forums, how to start and administer a project like socio-economic projects, or actual training in organizing. Training can either be formal or informal. In formal training a specific time schedule and course content are planned. In informal training the leaders or members are either actually made to do the tasks or activities so they can have concrete experience of them, and afterwards they evaluate their performance.

The fourth aspect of organizational consolidation, "mobilisasyon", refers to the concrete collective action of the members of the chapters in order to solve their immediate and long term problems. This can be in the form of issue-oriented action -- mass action oriented to raise publically issues affecting peasant women, or to demand solutions to problems of land, agricultural wage, and other problems facing the peasantry. Mobilization can also be in the form of organizing a socio-economic project to augment family income, health-related projects, child care, etc. This concept of "mobilization" which AMIHAN articulates on the national level

reflects the local politics of local chapters, such as shown in the politics of KAMMI (recall my discussion in chapter 5).

With these strategies AMIHAN creates peasant organizations that become a context where the peasant women can grow in social critical consciousness, understanding of peasant women's situation and how that is conctextualized in national issues and struggles, grow in feminist understanding, learn skills in collective action to deal with their concrete problems, develop leadership skills, and get a sense of solidarity in action. Thus, AMIHAN, like KAMMI, recognizes that consciousness-raising and organizing are on-going processes, and that not everyone may have the same level of understanding at a point in time. An AMIHAN national support member said to me, "Do not think that all peasant women in AMIHAN have the same level of political consciousness". Thus, for AMIHAN, consciousness is a process, a concept that local leaders of KAMMI and the national leaders of AMIHAN have experienced themselves.

Levels of Organizational Involvement

Within AMIHAN, I observed different organizational roles and involvement on the national level. There is the full-time activist/organizer, who gives full time work in the movement. She is financially supported by the federation because she is now unable to work in the farm directly. The full-time activist-organizer has indicated commitment to the goals of

the peasant women's movement and has shown a high level of political consciousness and adequate understanding of the peasantry and of the national situation. AMIHAN feels direly the need for full-time organizers, but due to financial limitations, it is unable to get as many full-time organizers as it wants to. The full-time organizers play a significant role in doing the day to day work needed for the growth and consolidation of the peasant women's movement organization. But as full-time organizers who are now somewhat uprooted from the day to day work in the farm, they face the challenge of being constantly aware of the concrete changing situation of their fellow peasants who directly work in the village farms and whose immediate situation may not be immediately visible to them. On the national level (at the time of my fieldwork) AMIHAN has been able to maintain at least 3 peasant women to serve as full-time activist/organizers, in contrast to KAMMI who at the time of fieldwork have not been able to support full-time peasant women organizers although they see the need for it and that there are peasant women who would like to be full-time organizers. This situation reflects that if AMIHAN is limited financially to support more than 3 full-time organizers, KAMMI as a local chapter is even more financially limited to support even one full-time organizer.

There are also those peasant women whose involvement in the peasant struggle is not full-time, but they are politically active while at the same time remaining directly

involved in the day to day farm production. I call them the tiller-activists. The tiller-activist combines political work with farm work and/ or domestic work. She ordinarily most of the time lives in the village or in the rural area close to her agricultural work. The tiller-activist may have had personal struggles with her husband in performing her multiple roles as political activist-farmer-wife-mother (if she is married). But because of her political consciousness she has been able to assert her public role. Sometimes the tiller activist may also be married to someone who is politically involved in the peasant movement, in which case her political activism may not be resented by her husband, but might even be encouraged, as in the case of some of the peasant women in Mindoro.

The tiller-activists play an important role in the life of the peasant women's movement and in the life of AMIHAN as a national federation. Because they are not uprooted from their direct agricultural production, they have the direct experience of the day to day life of peasant women in the village as they politically struggle for change. Full-time organizers who are unable to do direct everyday farm work as they do political work, have a lot to learn from the tiller-activists in keeping abreast with the local and village situation of the women peasantry. The tiller-activist may have an advantage in organizing over the full-time activist/organizer in the fact that she has more access to

the situation where organizing can be within the context of the peasant actual work/community situation of which she is personally a part of. Her disadvantage is having limited time for political organizing. The tiller-activist may also be limited financially since her political organizing expenses often times have to be shouldered by her, especially in the initial stages of the organizing work when the organization may not yet have organizational funds. It can be said that the tiller-activists provide the daily lifeblood of AMIHAN. Without them there will be no local chapters that will comprise the peasant women national federation and the peasant women's local struggles. The provincial representative of KAMMI to the AMIHAN National Council, Ate Ara, typifies this tiller-activist role.

Some AMIHAN members do special roles not ordinarily done by any member. These are what AMIHAN identifies as "mass leaders". "Mass leaders" articulate publically for the organization. They are more visible to the public because they often act as spokesperson for the goals, issues, ideology, and alternative program of action and development policies the organization stands for. "Mass leaders" are articulate, they have skills in public speaking and they have high political consciousness and are knowledgeable about issues relevant to peasant women and about national issues. Mass leaders play important roles in articulating issues in mass protest, in educational forums, in study sessions, and

in media relations. They have developed the skill or habit of self-study or reflection about what they will say before public presentations. The three full-time elected national peasant women leaders of AMIHAN also play the role of "mass leaders" for the federation. They usually represent the Federation in national and international events.

Peasant women can move from one level of organizational involvement to another, usually through election. No one generally gets static in the same level. Increased and consistent exposure with the collective action and activities of the organization changes one's political feminist consciousness over time, and thus one's level of action. For example, an AMIHAN national mass leader and full-time organizer who began as as a village level organizer, said:

> I worked in the church for 10 years as president of BCC (basic Christian community). We reflected about the Bible. For 14 years I was a nutrition leader. I organized study sessions/seminars for mothers on health and sanitation and breastfeeding. On December 1985 I received an invitation to come to an assembly that was held in Marbel. The meeting was held in our church. We studied the general situation of women and the different forms of oppression of women in different sectors. It was then when I realized that women have an important role. In the Church we do not study this. In February 1986 I received a second invitation to the assembly of peasant women. They saw that I was a progressive leader, so they chose me to be a leader. I accepted to be a leader of BUGAS (Oppressed and Exploited Peasant Women Who Are Ready to Stand Up and Struggle for Their Rights). Since I was chosen as a leader, I started organizing. I would visit women individually in their homes. When I had already 15 women I would ask them if they would like to come together and meet. I was able to organize on the provincial level in South Cotabato. I did organizing work there for two and a half years before I became a national leader.

Arriving at a Collective Political Position on Development Issues

AMIHAN takes a collective political position development issues. Representatives from the provincial and regional chapters to the National Council usually deliberate on these issues to arrive at an official stand that AMIHAN must take on these issues. For example, on July 23-25, 1989 during the AMIHAN National Council meeting held in Manila (in which I was a participant observer), regional and provincial representatives from 22 AMIHAN chapters analyzed some major development issues and deliberated collectively on what the appropriate political position AMIHAN must take on these issues. In the following I discuss how the AMIHAN National Council arrived at a political position on some major development policies and government programs. It is important to show this process here because it indicates AMIHAN's attempt to put forth a collective voice, perspective and analysis on these development issues that impact on the peasant women's lives.

Foreign debt crisis. On July 23, 1989 the National Council had a study session on Philippine foreign debt crisis and they reflected collectively on what should the position of AMIHAN be on the issue. The session began with a talk on foreign debt and its impact on the peasantry by a staff member of the national office of KMP, Tonio, followed by an open forum. Then the Executive Director of AMIHAN, Tina, briefly touched on the impact of Philippine foreign debt on women.

Tonio presented some statistical facts on Philippine foreign debt:

> The Philippine foreign debt in 1989 is $29.7 billion equivalent to 107 billion pesos. The Philippines has paid 90 billion pesos for its 1989 debt. This is 44% of the 220 billion pesos Philippine fiscal budget in 1989, and 35% of the national income from export.

Given these objective facts, Tonio, related the foreign debt issue to the Letter of Intent (LOI) which stipulates the conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for its loan package to the Philippines:

> The LOI program takes effect from 1989 until 1992. What are the content of the 1989 LOI? They are: 1) continued implementation of deregulation policies and import liberalization; 2) implement an austerity program, increased savings and control expenditures with the goal of securing certainty for the payment of foreign debt and controlling deficit; 3) attracting foreign investment and encouraging private investment in the control of the economy. Before the 1989 LOI was approved, 1,217 items were to be deregulated -- this means that their prices will be decontrolled, and uncontrolled importation of 1,700 items were to be allowed beginning in March 1989. The World Bank has targetted 2,300 items for deregulation.

Then, Tonio traced the history of IMF deregulation in Philippine economy and its impact on agricultural development:

> In 1981 there was also an LOI for 11 industrial projects. In 1984 the program for agriculture came out. In 1984, with LOI, the deregulation in trading started, government control on commmerce was removed. The effect was increased in prices of fertilizers and pesticides. There was import liberalization. The Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority which had price control authority was abolished. In 1984, the price of fertilizer per bag was 104 pesos, in 1985 it increased to 300 pesos per bag. With government control removed, multinational corporations got in control of fertilizers and pesticides production and marketing. Atlas and Philphos for example control 39% of the market. In 1984, also began the decontrol of entry of imported goods.

Tonio specifically pointed out the effects of LOI on the peasantry. First, he analyzed the effect of LOI on rice production, such as increase in agricultural inputs resulting to increased poverty and debt bondage among peasants, further reinforcing usury that exploits the peasantry. This situation, Tonio presented, results to decrease in rice production creating a rice shortage and rice stocks:

> What are the effects of LOI on the peasantry? First, in the production of rice, material imputs in production which now comprise 35% of the total production cost will be left to free market -- that is when fertilizers and pesticides are in demand during planting season their prices will be higher, and after planting season when there is less demand for it, their prices will be lower. For example, now that the planting season is almost over, the price of fertilizer has gone down from 200 pesos to 175 pesos per bag. Secondly, under the situation where peasants have no production capital and where majority of them do not own the land they till, increase in the prices of production inputs would mean a) further bondage into usury, b) decrease in production because some peasants will reduce the amount of land area for farming and decrease production inputs. The results are decrease in the peasants' income and share in the harvest as well as lesser supply of rice stocks for the market.
>
> Our annual rice stock should be 6.2 million metric tons, we are short of 800,000 metric tons. Our present rice stock is good only until August 1, 1989. In 1985 we borrowed from Indonesia 200,000 metric tons, and we paid for it in 1989 also in kind. What is often said as rice "export" to Indonesia because we had "excess" rice production was not really export, it was a payment for debt. Thirdly, the consequent liberalization of credit benefited more the usurers who borrow from agricultural banks and then in turn they lend to peasants. Peasants usually are not able to borrow money from rural banks.

Another effect of LOI that Tonio pointed out is the decline in the National Food Authority's (NFA) procurement and marketing of rice, which was set to stabilize the price of

rice:

> In the procurement of rice, the National Food Authority (NFA), is able to buy only 9% of the total rice harvest during the time of Marcos, and only 4% during the Aquino regime. In the latest 1989 harvest time, it has not been able to procure any rice grains. In 1988 the NFA set aside 700 million pesos in order to buy rice from California. In the world market, the price of rice is cheaper, because they are surpluses of some big industrialized countries.

With the deregulation of NFA, Tonio analyzed, private traders are able to increase their control of rice procurement and marketing resulting to increase in the price of rice:

> Traders have gained significant control of the procurement of palay. Yesterday, in a conference, they said they control 91% of the procurement of rice. The average daily consumption of rice of is 16, 800 metric tons, and 100 kilos per capita consumption annually. The NFA releases an average of 1,362 metric tons per day, while the private traders releases 15,438 metric tons everyday.

Tonio also raised the relationship of import liberalization as one of the IMF/World Bank conditions and the creation of pre-conditions for cash crop production resulting to local food insecurity:

> Today the importation of flour is increasing in quantity. We are being led towards the production of cash crops, rather than staple food. This is one of the IMF/World Bank strategies -- to create the conditions that would lead to cash crop production.
>
> The decreased government support for staple food production and marketing can also lead to more lands becoming idle and abandoned. This will lead to food insecurity.

Tonio's presentation was followed by an open forum. The following questions and additional points were raised clarifying other issues related to foreign debt crisis:

1. Isn't the Department of Trade and Industry supposed to control prices of goods?

Tonio: The Department of Trade and Industry is vested only with price monitoring power -- which means that it cannot enforce price control measures.

The government gets 88% of its revenue from consumer taxes, indirect taxes on goods and services that citizens buy. People's real wage does not catch up with the increase in prices of goods and services, although there might be slight increase in wages.

2. What is the role of the U.S. in this debt crisis?

Tonio: The U.S. is the biggest borrower in the world. The Mini-Marshall Plan, also known as the Brady Plan and now generally referred to as the development aid plan, actually promotes the free market economy where government control on private enterprise is minimal. The conditions attached to development loans can impose the free market economy principles on the political economies of the country dependent on aid. This is related to the kind of relationship of an imperialistic country with a neo-colonial country.

3. What are some actions and solutions that we can do?

Tonio: Price control is not the solution to our problem. The solution lies in the unified position of the peasantry and other sectors. We can also demand for certain agricultural policies, like integrated agricultural loan fund, subsidized production fund, or to roll back prices. To implement subsidized production program the government would need $5 billion dollars to buy pesticides and fertilizers and give these free to the farmers. The government also would need to set aside $5 billion for credit subsidy in the form of writing off peasants' debts from agricultural banks. We can also demand for rice calamity fund -- this subsidized buying and selling of palay. The Task Force Bigas (Task Force on Rice) has in fact brought out this issue. We need at least 20 billion pesos to subsidize a rice calamity fund that will be profitable to the peasants.

Peasants can demand for continued subsidized production which can eventually be made to be self-sustaining. This means that eventually peasants must be the ones to procure and market palay or rice in the form of cooperatives. In turn this will open up new jobs.

We can also organize mass action. Strategies for the mass action may include mass campaign that will put pressure

on the government to stop the sending of rice from the rural areas to Manila.

4. How is foreign debt related to CARP?

Tonio: All these issues are related to genuine agrarian reform. Under CARP Philippine foreign debt will increase. Where will the government get the payment for land to landlords? They intend to borrow. The 3 billion pesos that is budgeted for the Department of AGriculture does not include subsidy for peasants.

Since Tonio did not include in his presentation the impact of foreign debt crisis on women, which is typical of KMP's framework of analysis, the executive director of AMIHAN naional office, Tina, presented some impact of foreign debt on Filipino women, such as the exportation of female labor to pay foreign debt and deeper inadequacy in social services that can benefit women:

> One effect is the feminization of labor -- particularly in the form of exporting women's labor as payment for external debt. Filipinas are cheap labor abroad. Two-thirds of Philippine labor abroad are women.
>
> The other effect is decrease in social services resulting to increased malnourishment and high mortality rate of women and children. Many women have died from lack of medical attention during childbirth.

Furthermore, Tina pointed out how ordinary people pay for this foreign debt as consumers, while development policies and decisions of the government do not solve the debt crisis:

> For every 1 peso 60 centavos go to the payment of Philippine external debt. It is the consumers, we, who pay this foreign debt. Every time we buy goods in the market, we pay indirectly for this debt through the taxes placed on goods. Because these debts earn interest, our debt increases even if we do not borrow for a certain period.
>
> The development policies of the government do not solve

> the debt crisis of our nation. There are already other nations that have declared a moratorium on their debt payments until the time they become more economically stable. But the Philippine government said "Amen" to the IMF-World Bank policies.

Tina did not really adequately talk about the particular ways the debt crisis impact on Filipino peasant women, instead she threw back the issue to the peasant women to reflect on its specific impact on them.

Then, she asked the question: "What is the position of AMIHAN on the debt crisis?". Each of the peasant women delegates of this National Council expressed their views. All of them were critical of the policies that brought about the Philippine debt crisis: that foreign debt has not benefited them, that it increases their poverty, that they are paying for this debt through their consumption of goods. They proposed a wide range of decisions and alternatives to deal with the debt crisis, ranging from non-payment of the debt to limiting debt service to 10% of export earnings to halting import liberalization and reinstating price control laws to promoting national industrialization. Other propsals touched on political re-structuring such as, forming a new government which brings together a coalition of progressive forces and recognition of peasant women's capability to participate in decision-making on state policies, and resistance to U.S. imperialism in the Philippines. Some proposed protesting publically foreign debt policies through mass demonstrations. The following statements about their

political position on foreign debt from the peasant women delegates (I state here in the order they were mentioned) illustrate this:

- Do not pay. We did not benefit from it.
- We cannot avoid paying. Everytime we buy we pay. What if prices are not increased.
- What benefits did the peasants get from the foreign debt? None!
- Don't pay. We did not benefit from it.
- Those we have not benefited from, we must not pay. That which benefited the people, we must pay.
- Limit our payment for the debt to 10% of our export earnings.
- Give priority on social services and other projects for the people.
- Stop import liberalization.
- Promote national industrialization.
- Reduce the military budget and give it to the social services.
- Return the price control law.
- Resist the expoitation of foreign imperialism.
- What do we see about the Aquino government?
- We became more poor.
- Change the U.S.-Aquino imperialist system.
- There is still the need to recognize the progressive organizations. There must be in the government people coming from the people's organizations, especially in government agencies for peasants.
- Why are we not recognized, if peasant women have the capacities.
- There must be a coalition government.
- That has long been being campaigned for by KMP.
- Each organization already carries that issue.
- Tomorrow there will be a rally. This is the concept/theme of the rally; the women's overall issue is militarization.
- We'll make placards. Bring out the issues particular to the chapters.

The Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW). The Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW) is an example of how the "integrationist" perspective on women in development can be translated into a development policy/program within the nature of development that is based on Modernization. Aida

Fulleros Santos and Lynn F. Lee in their "The Debt Crisis: A Treadmill of Poverty For Filipino Women" (1989:58-59) wrote a critical description of PDPW:

> On March 8th, 1989, International Women's Day, the National Commission on the Role of the Filipino Women (NCRFW, or NCW for short), launched the Philippine Development Plan For Women, 1989-1992, popularly known as the PDPW. Billed as a "companion" piece to the Five-Year Medium-Term Phillippine Development Plan, 1988-1992, the PDPW presents the government's agenda for Filipino women. This is the first time that a development framework has been drawn up that attempts to comprehensively address women's involvement in all spheres of economic activity. The over-all framework which guides the PDPW is the "integration" of women into development. . . .
> . . . However, the realization of the Plan is premised on the Medium-Term Plan's articulation of the need to "integrate" women into development, which assumes that women are not in development. The framework of "integrating" women into development has been criticized by feminist women's groups as women are "in development" but they are not benefitting from it. . . . . as a plan of the government the PDPW is naturally a captive of the system. As part of the government's program it adopts the position of government on economic policies, which include debt servicing and the CARP.
> . . . As mentioned, the PDPW as a government plan must follow the policies of government and so its potential to benefit women is circumscribed by its context.

PDPW was also one of the development issues that the AMIHAN National Council took a political position on. On July 24, 1989 AMIHAN National Council arrived at a political position on the PDPW through the following process:

First the Executive Director of AMIHAN National Office, Tina, provided a background on PDPW and the importance of studying the issue. Then the peasant women representatives gave their own analysis and reactions to the issue. The deliberation was summarized in the form of a political

position on PDPW.

Tina provided the following background information on PDPW. First, she gave basic facts about PDPW:

> What is the PDPW? During the Aquino government a development plan for women was set up under Executive Order #348, a five-year development plan for women, officially called Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW). Partly this was brought about by the fact that there were people with feminist consciousness who got into government positions during the Aquino administration. The government set up the National Council on Women (NCW) to implement PDPW. Remy Rikken is the Commissioner in the NCW. The NCW is linked with NEDA (National Economic Development Agency). Solita Monsod, who was then connected with NEDA but has now resigned, was one of those who formulated the PDPW.

Then, Tina explained how PDPW is related to other development plans of the Philippine government:

> PDPW is not separated from other programs of other government departments. PDPW is based on the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) of NEDA which is also a five-year development plan for the whole country. MTDP contains a 5-year development plan for all sectors of the economy, example, housing, agrarian reform. Part of MTDP has also a plan for the progress of women. MTDP provisions deal on import liberalization, CARP, trade relations, foreign debt payment, government program on social services, multinational corporations, OMNIBUS Investment Code which contains provisions on how to attract foreign investment into the Philippines.
>
> PDPW is linked to the national development plan of the government.

Tina brought out the manner by which PDPW was formulated citing the non-participatory nature of the process of formulation:

> It was formulated by many people through several consultations. In fact GABRIELA and AMIHAN representatives were there too. But GABRIELA and AMIHAN did not know that PDPW was going to be formulated out of these consultations, since when we were called to these meetings they told us that it was a forum. PDPW was launched on March 8, 1989 at Malacanang at the same time

that one of our AMIHAN national leaders was speaking in a rally.

PDPW in document contains 17 chapters. But Tina talked mainly about chapters 1 and 2 because chapter 1 gives an over-all framework and chapter 2 is relevant to AMIHAN since it deals with agricultural and agrarian reform. She provided an over-all analysis of the framework around which PDPW is premised:

> What is the over-all framework/vision of PDPW on women? Chapter 1 gives an analysis of women's situation. It talks about the double burden of women. However, its analysis is not contextualized within the broader political-economic situation in the Philippines. PDPW says that women are poor because women are subordinate to men and that men earn higher wages than women.

She summarized the objectives and program of PDPW as consisting of the following:

> PDPW program and objectives consist of the following: 1) Individual help - the establishment of support mechanisms for women like day care centers, skills training to make women more assertive; 2) Household and family - promote shared parenting, that child care is not the sole responsibility of women but also of the men; 3) Socio-cultural - promote non-sexist education, analyze the different forms of discrimination against women; 4) Economic - promote equal wage between men and women, promote the women's right to own land; 5) Political - set up legal mechanisms for the implementation of the provisions of PDPW, like formulation of laws that stipulate sanctions and punishment for the non-implementation of PDPW.

Tina described chapter 2 of PDPW as specifically dealing on agricultural and agrarian reform and how PDPW and CARP are linked:

> Chapter 2 of PDPW which deals on agricultural and agrarian reform contains the following: 1) ways by which rural women could be integrated into rural development; 2) how women can share in the fruits of progress ; 3)

> increase women's participation in ameliorating poverty. CARP (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program) is the mechanism by which PDPW can achieve these 3 objectives. PDPW views that CARP is the solution to peasant women's problems, so it aims at mobilizing peasant women in implementing CARP. During Marcos government, the agrarian reform program, P.D. 27, made no mention of peasant women.
>
> PDPW targets 1.2 million grassroot women within 5 years to be given by managers and technicians orientation on the objectives of PDPW, and targets 5.2 million families to be given education and training. PDPW's strategies consist of the following: a) women's orientation program, b) promotion of PDPW in the rural areas, c) strenthening the participation of women through research on women that will provide the basis for ways to use women in government projects, and through monitoring and inter-agency networking between non-governmental organizations and government agencies; d) promotion of income-generating projects; e) provisioning access to credit for women; f) promotion of women-oriented technology; g) building of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas; h) promotion of research on women; i) training on information and media services; j) promotion of women's organizations.

Tina pointed out that there is a close connection between CARP and PDPW in setting up mechanism for implementing both government development programs, with CARP becoming the "implementing mechanism" for PDPW:

> With regards to land reform, the target of CARP is to give emancipation patents within 5 years to 1,981,498 farmers. It is expected that 5.9 million women will benefit from this. Under CARP the Certificate of Land Transfer is called Emancipation Patent. The objectives of PDPW in using CARP as its implementing mechanism are: a) to integrate women into CARP, b) to mobilize women in the implementation of CARP and in the organization of cooperatives, c) to make women partners of the government in implementing CARP, d) to coordinate government agencies in organizing peasant women. PDPW's strategy to achieve these objectives include the following: a) recruitment of peasant women into government organizations, b) increasing production, c) providing jobs when it is not planting season, d) improving the education and training of women, e) setting up ways to monitor PDPW projects. What do you think about PDPW?

With this background above presented the peasant women representatives in the AMIHAN National Council gave their own comments on PDPW. In their perspective PDPW does not truly address the issues AMIHAN views are fundamental. It has not truly generated genuine political participation from the organized peasant women who are demanding such kind of participation, thus, they feel manipulated and used. Within the perspective of AMIHAN National Council, PDPW has not incorporated the change agenda that will liberate peasant women from the systemic oppression of militarization and the structures it preserves. In their view it is a development package that seeks to integrate women into a political system that is losing its legitimacy. They have seen contradictions in the process of its formulation and in its substance. Thus, they raised critical crucial questions: If PDPW sees the organization of women as a vehicle to improving their livelihood, then why is militarization the response of the government now that they are organizing? Will peasant women be simply beneficiaries of the development plan or will they be the active social actors, the determiners of the program? Why does PDPW not address the external control on the nature of Philippine development? Why is it linked with CARP that has been rejected by the peasants? Why has it isolated the situation of Filipino women from the broader social-political-economic-historical forces in which their oppression is contextualized? Here is projected a view of women's

oppression as not only relational between men and women but also linked to development policies that form the roots of women's poverty/powerlessness and that of the majority of the Filipino people. The following statements of the peasant women illustrate their critical response to PDPW. I state them in the order they were said and without paraphrasing or categorizing them so as to preserve the tone of their words:

- In my opinion it is garbage.
- In my view, the ideas in PDPW was taken from us, but theirs is limited.
- I do not believe in it. They do not deal about feudalism, that is the most important.
- Our objectives are also there. We are given the chance to come forward.
- It looks good, but how about its implementation. If it is really people-oriented, why not course it through people's organizations that are people-oriented. Besides, it is connected with Low Intensity Conflict, so it can be said, here are what you are asking for. - For me PDPW is not good...it is riding on our program to silence us.
- The 3 problems of the country that we are carrying are not there. Feudalism and imperialism are not being talked about.
- I am not in favor of PDPW, it is just a way to implement CARP, we know what CARP is.
- This is not the solution to remove Low Intensity Conflict. We must focus on the major problem of peasants. What do we want to remove? The system of feudalism. Is that the solution to our problem?.
- My answer is an answer to the answer. Is it good? Yes, it is good only on writing.
- The issue of CARP is the loophole in PDPW.
- It should have been PARCODE not CARP.
- It is just like a way to get much money, women will be used in order to solicit money. The contents, concept of the book came from us, we were used in order to facilitate the borrowing of money from other countries. Its implementation is in five years.
- That will be implemented. How can we benefit from it without allowing ourselves to be used?.
- We cannot be sure that it is good.
- We cannot expect benefit for all, because 1.5 million only is the target, whoever is more influential and close to the government will be the ones to benefit from

it.
- They are giving solutions, but it is like dole-out. What kind of education are they going to provide?
- It is not good in all its aspects. Is it good in essence?.
- In general it is not good.
- There are some particular aspects that are good.
- If the implementation is not good is what we should watch for.
- How can this be implemented if it is linked with CARP?
- There are particular aspects of PDPW that we can use.
- Our principle should be mass-oriented. We must really analyze this.
- Why don't we analyze it now. There should be participation of peasants there. Why should it be the managers who will be the organizers for PDPW?
- We were not consulted. We were not made to participate.
- I went there, it was not clear to me that they were going to make this book about PDPW. I asked them what they will do about militarization. They did not answer me.
- This is just a pacifier. Why did they not answer the question on militarization? They ignored AMIHAN.
- We must also be watchful about invitations we receive.
- As if we were made into toys. As if in the mind of Cory we women must now be silent.
- Because we are already shouting, we are now making noise. O, here it is, be silent now. Are we going to allow ourselves to be silenced?.
- What they have said is true. We have seen that we cannot rely on the government that this is the solution to our problem. But we can use it as a legitimation of our organizing women. We can use some of its content.
- Why is this coming out at this time that the women have began resisting? This is one way to silence us.
- We must organize. We can use it in legitimizing our organizing work for women.
- Now that we are already organizing, why is militarization the answer? With all these things happening now, PDPW is already blurred.
- There have been so many bad things done.
- MTDP, on which this is based, is anti-mass oriented.
- This is part of the propaganda that Aquino's government is doing good.

With these comments from the peasant women, Tina summarized AMIHAN's position on PDPW and wrote them on the board:

- Summary: A. Particular to peasant women, we are not in favor that PDPW is based on CARP.
B. We are not in favor that PDPW has not addressed the fundamental problems.
C. We are not certain that this will have good implementation.
D. Be careful and watchful that this might be part of the strategy of Low Intensity Conflict.
E. But because we are open, let's see what happens.

Women and development aid. On July 25, 1989 the AMIHAN National Council also deliberated on the issue of women and development aid. Mila, a member of GABRIELA (National Coalition of Women's Organizations in the Philippines into which AMIHAN is also federated) gave a background information on the theme,"Kababaihan, Kaunlaran at ang Tulong Pangkaunlaran" (Women, Development, and Development Aid). The discussion covered 3 main themes: a) what is meant by women in development, b) why do foreign countries give aid and how do they give it, c) what is meant by "official development aid" (ODA) and what should AMIHAN's perspective be on this. In the following I give a descriptive account of Mila's presentation and how the peasant women would interject their own comments as Mila was speaking. I present it here in a descriptive fashion so as to put the reader in the process that went on and not be distracted by my own interpretation of what was being said.

Mila began:

There is a network of women's organizations called the Group of 10, organized in 1988, with main interest in women in development and looks into the impact of

development on women in the Philippines, including the issue of foreign aid and the debt problem. The Group of 10 found out that part of the funding from CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) went to the CAFGUs in Negros. This led to the concern of women's groups on the issue of external funding.

In the international scene, we have First World nations and Third World nations. The First World consists of rich nations and the Third World consists of poor nations. In both of these there is an elite class and "masa" (mass). Change begins from the "masa". The First World is rich because it exploits the Third World.

The First World has an ideology of development that is based on capitalism and imperialism. It is capitalism and imperialism that brought progress to the First World, so they view that this is also the nature of development that will make the Third World progress.

But there emerged the liberation movements in the Third World that have a new and different ideology of development. Their idea of development is one that is participative, that includes the participation of the "masa" - one that is mass-oriented ("linyang masa").

At this time 2 AMIHAN national peasant leaders interjected:

There is contradiction between the First World and the Third World, there is no progress in the Third World.

Mila continued:

In the period between 1940's to the 1960's America's Marshall Plan was conceived and implemented. The basic goal is to achieve economic growth through maintaining a war economy. After the world war, the main thrust of the United Nations was reconstruction.

In the 1970's the idea of "basic-needs-strategy" to development emerged as a way to deal with the poverty in the Third World. The basic issues raised were housing, food production, and education. But at the end of the decade the Third World has not progressed. However, it was during this period that Vietnam won and this was a big slap on the United States.

In the 1980's there emerged an awareness that development is different for women, men, and children. There evolved the concept that women have the right to participate in development. There were feminists who lobbied in the U.S., their call was "integration of women in development", but without a critical perspective or analysis of the nature of development presently taking place. This was also the ideology of the United Nations. The response of the women's movement was: why will you

integrate Third World women into development, they will be exploited; what must be done is change society.

Two national peasant women leaders commented:

Rich nations want to help poor nations so they can benefit from it.

Mila continued:

What is meant by development aid?
There are different kinds of aid. They can be money, material, service (like volunteers), moral (like campaigns), commodities (like relief, fertilizers, pesticides, rice surplus), or exchanges (like technical cooperation). Sources of aid can be, a) progressive countries like United States, Canada, Japan, West Germany, b) global institutions like the United Nations, c) development aid agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank. Types of aid can be non-governmental (aid coming from non-governmental institutions), and official development aid (ODA) - aid coming from governments and given to governments. Global institutions such as the UN give aid to the Philippine government but 10% of that aid goes to non-governmental organizations. Official aid for country programs are given to governments, but 10-15% are for NGOs.

Why do they give aid?

Some of the peasant women responded:

- Because they gain much from interest.

- Why do they give aid to NGOs if they are against NGOs?

- They do not want to smell bad to the people - (figuratively means, they want to create a good image to the people) "

- That is just a cover. Some of the aid goes to buying helicpters. Much of that also goes to their own pockets.

Mila went on:

Why do they give aid? The reasons are mainly political, economic or commercial. With the giving of aid goes certain conditions for the recipient country that will benefit multinational corporations. There are also surplus goods in the developed countries, like rice, that

they want to market in the recipient country. Aid is also given to support the government. For example in the Philippines it was during the 1970-1980 decade that aid increased, the period when Marcos declared Martial Law. In 1986, when Cory Aquino came into power, funding agencies looked for socio-economic projects to fund. Some of these monies went to financing the CAFGUs, like what happened in Negros. By financing these socio-economic projects, funding institutions and the government are able to get information under the guise of data-gathering, such as who comprise the membership of the organization.

Essentially, it is the citizens' taxes that serve as financial sources for these development aid agencies.

These aid agencies are beginning to be afraid of the resistance of the NGOs that is why now they are helping. Their real intentions have already been exposed.

The peasant women commented:

- Aid for livelihood projects are given to those that are already consolidated.

- NGOs are now being encouraged, where there are already chapters it is there where they come in.

Mila concluded:

Official development aid is a political support for the Aquino government. Since Aquino came into power we accepted invitations for joint projects with the government. This is a schema to weaken the NGOs. PDPW is a big problem. Funding agencies are asking what we think about it and if we are going to join it.

What is our position on development aid? Should we accept it? Why? Yes or No? Under what principles or basis?

With regards to ODA (official development aid) what are the principles that should guide us in dealing with ODA? What programs or activities of AMIHAN must be supported? What other tasks do we still need to do?

At this point the members of the AMIHAN National Council gave their critical comments. I present their comments here in the sequence that they were mentioned:

- Official development aid does not reach the hands of the peasantry. It is the middle forces who are able to have access to it. It must be given instead to people's organizations directly. If it is given to us directly,

we can be sure that it will benefit the peasants.

- The government officials are already squabbling over the money; the same with the non-governmental organizations. The issues are graft and corruption and that aid must be directly channelled to grassroot non-governmental organizations.

- We are against aid.

- It might be alright to accept aid, but we must have the principle that we must have a say on its policies. But official development aid sets up conditions.

- We must clearly understand the principles and basis for accepting aid. If we are going to accept aid it must be given directly to people's organizations.

- We can accept it, so that we can raise the consciousness of other women. There is no one we can rely on to act, except ourselves.

- If we will rely on the government, nothing will happen. If they are going to give aid there should be no conditions set. It should be given directly to us, and we strive to better the situation of women.

- Aid must go directly to the people's organization, not anymore through an institution. Whatever principle on which to base the giving of aid, it must be a people-oriented principle.

- We must really know what is the nature of that agency giving aid, we must be certain about what their principles are.

- In my opinion, we must accept, but they should not dictate to us, we must be the one to design our plans.

- It should be administered directly by the organization, but in a way that will not harm us.

- Know the ways for it to be useful to us. What is the personal interest of the one giving aid? Their aid is not really the real solution, aid from other countries is just secondary, we must first attend to our own problems.

- The aid that we receive is a debt, we will be paying for that. But we must not lost our principle, that they should not put conditions on us. They are treating us like children, so we will not shout, so we will not

protest.

- In addition, we should accept, because even if we don't take it, they will give anyway. But we must not give up our principle.

- How about official development aid, are we going to accept it?

- My recommendation is that we must first research before we define our position.

At this juncture, the AMIHAN National Council recognized that it needed to gather more information on which to base their position on development aid. They outlined the following as tasks that they still needed to do in order to arrive at a political position: 1) Campaign for fact-finding mission on how the government is using aid and at the same time investigate how it relates to the situation of peasant women's organizations; 2) conduct research and documentation on the experience of AMIHAN chapters on development aid, or their participation in official development aid; 3) organize consultations on the issue; 4) conduct internal educational campaigns on official development aid.

In this process, AMIHAN indicates that its National Council does not automatically take a political position on a development issue. There is serious study involve in the process. It recognizes the use of research, documentation and reflection on their experiences as basis for defining its official stand on issues. It is an attempt to make informed decisions.

Arriving at a collective analysis and political position

on a development issue is an important part of AMIHAN's politics. Its political position on issues serves as a basic principle that they consider in other organizational decisions. It is a manifestation of its political will in asserting grassroot Filipino sovereignty and the peasant women's role in defining that sovereignty. It is a political act that seeks to redirect development policies from its current technocratic, manipulative, exploitative nature. It is a resistance towards gaining their right to have political control of policies that affect peasant women's lives as well as the lives of the majority of the Filipino people.

Mass Protests

AMIHAN participates in mass protest action relevant to its change agenda. At the time of fieldwork I have observed that almost everyday there was a demonstration or rally taking place in Manila, the most urbanized and metropolitan region of the Philippines, and also where the Malacanang Palace (the Executive House of the Philippine President), the Philippine Congress, and United States Embasssy as well as other major government offices and departments are located. According to an AMIHAN national leader, Ate Laly, an average of 3 demonstrations a week take place in Manila, which I did not see in Mindoro.

Demonstrations and rallies as forms of mass protest dramatize publically issues that do not get fair amount of

attention by the Philippine government-controlled media. They become the context in which AMIHAN's political position on development issues get publically articulated. They indicate the growing open mass organized resistance to the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines that is coming not only from one sector, but from all sectors. It is a manifestation that although official development policies do not reflect the people's alternative agenda, such as AMIHAN's change agenda, it does not mean that there are no resistance to these officially legitimated policies, and that there are no other development perspectives that are coming from below. In the following I give a descriptive account of the two mass demonstrations that I participated in with some AMIHAN members in Manila, in which AMIHAN and KMP contested current development policies of the government and offered their alternative change agenda.

The July 24 rally: The people's own state-of-the-nation address. On July 24,1989 President Aquino was scheduled to give the State of the Nation Address. Progressive groups organized a rally in Manila to give an alternative State of the Nation Address. The theme of the rally was foreign debt crisis and militarization. Different delegations of organizations came from different parts of the country mostly from Luzon where Manila is accessible by land transportation. The demonstrators, approximately 5,000, assembled at the Welcome Rotanda near Quezon Boulevard at about one o'clock

in the afternoon and marched to Mendiola in front of the Malacanang Palace. AMIHAN National Council was holding their meeting at this time in Quezon City with 17 delegates from different chapters in different parts of the country. The AMIHAN National Council representatives all joined the rally and I participated with them. The delegates prepared placards with slogans that reflected AMIHAN'S political position on the issues related to the theme of the rally. These slogans also show how the peasant women relate larger national issues to their concrete situation/experience as peasant women. These were the slogans they made:

Detachments at checkpoints sa kanayunan
Hindi kailangan
Sila and palasyin
Hindi ang mamayan

Translation:

(Detachments and checkpoints in the
the rural areas are not needed,
They are the ones that must be sent away
not the citizens)
(AMIHAN - Panay)

1. LOI dagdag na nagpapahirap sa mga kababaihang magbubukid

   (The Letter of Intent adds to the hardship of peasant women)

2. Tanggalin ang total war dito sa Pilipinas

   (Dismantle total war in the Philippines)

3. Dagdag na kahirapan ang pangungutang sa ibang bansa

   (Foreign debt means increased poverty)

4. Tanggalin ang mga CAFGU's sa mga kanayunan

(Dismantle the CAFGU's in the rural areas)

5. Itigil ang pangangabuso ng mga military
sa kababaihang magbubukid sa kanayunan

(Stop military abuses against peasant women in the rural areas)
(AMIHAN - Samar)

Utang panglabas
DAGDAG SA
KAHIRAPAN NG
KABABAIHANG MAGBUBUKID

(Foreign debt adds to the
poverty of peasant women)
(AMIHAN - Negros)

Kababaihan sa MINDORO
Sumasakit na ang ulo
Dahil sa taas ng presyo
ng lahat ng bilihin.

(Women of Mindoro

Their heads are aching
Because of high prices of all goods)

Utang sa labas ng bansa
Hindi na dapat na bayaran
Dahil hindi pinakinabangan
Ng ating bayan.

(Foreign debt
need not be paid
because it did not benefit our nation)
(AMIHAN - Mindoro)

Military, CAFGUs, Vigilantes
Kapag-operasyon
Kababaihang inocente ang inaatake
Tumutungis parang tigre
Salot!
Tigilan ninyo kami!!!

(Military, CAFGUs, Vigilantes
During military operations
It is innocent women that they attack
They growl like tigers.

Liars!
Stop doing this to us!!!)
(AMIHAN - Panay)

June 9, 1989 mass rally. On June 9 I participated in the rally led by KMP and participated in by AMIHAN. This rally was held in commemoration of the massacre of 13 peasants who were among the demonstrators at Mendiola, in front of the Malacanang Palace, on June 9, 1987, during the second year of President Corazon Aquino's government. Various groups and different organizations from Metro-Manila and the provinces came to this rally. There were delegations from Bataan, Quezon, Nueva Ecija, Cabanatuan, Pampanga, Negros. By identifying their banners I could tell some of the different organizations involved in the rally -- KMP (National Peasant Movement of the Philippines), AMIHAN (National Federation of Peasant Women), KMU (National Union of Workers, May 1st Movement), BAYAN (a national coalition of progressive groups), SAMAKANA (an organization of urban poor women), religious sector groups, and GABRIELA.

I joined AMIHAN's march with other sectors from Luzon, from the public park in front of the Manila Post Office where we began to assemble at 1 p.m. and began walking to Plaza Miranda at about 2 p.m. On the way to Plaza Miranda, Ate Loy, an AMIHAN national mass leader acted as the speaker, in a yellow and red jeepney that was leading the march on the usually heavily-trafficked streets of downtown Manila. As the march moved on, with a loud speaker she spoke strongly against

Aquino's land reform, "CARP". Her voice thundered loud for the bystanders to hear.

When we arrived Plaza Miranda, many people were already there with their banners. A student was speaking on the roof of the underpass in front of Quiapo Church by the vicinity of Plaza Miranda. He spoke about the youth's and students' solidarity with the peasants. He spoke vigilantly against Aquino's land reform. There was a speaker from a labor organization. There was also a speaker from Negros, a woman evacuee who testified about the sufferings of those who evacuated because of military operations in Negros.

From Plaza Miranda, we proceeded to Mendiola, near Malacanang Palace where President Aquino lives. Before we moved on to Mendiola from Plaza Miranda, the demonstrators chanted, "Huwag matakot! Huwag matakot! Magkapigbisig, makibaka!" (Do not be afraid! Do not be afraid! Join hands in struggle!). Someone shouted with the loud speaker, "Handa na ba tayong patungong Mendiola?" (Are we ready to proceed to Mendiola?). The whole crowd answered with determination, "Oo!" (Yes!). My brother who volunteered to escort me suggested that I don't go up to Mendiola because it was there where peasants were massacred two years ago. But I said: No we must join the people.

I happened to march with the peasant women delegation from Bataan, a province in the central part of Luzon, about 5-6 hours drive from Manila. As we crossed arms and held

hands while we marched to Mendiola, Monica, the one at my left, said to the eight of us who were supposed to walk together, "Whatever happens we must not separate from each other". I never met these women before, but I felt one with them as if there was one vision that was uniting our steps together.

At Mendiola another program of speeches and nationalist songs was presented. Determination and anger against the government's policies marked the tone of the speakers -- the peasant, the worker, the urban poor women, the religious. They all spoke against Aquino's development program -- land reform program, militarization, IMF-World Bank policies in the Philippines, U.S. imperialism.

We sat down on the streets as the program went on. I saw young and old women and men. While the media tend to present poor people as easily manipulated to join mass protest, these ordinary people did not appear as if they were simply cowed into this event. No, they were conscious of what they were doing; they were conscious of the risk of their action, but they were there anyway.

I was impressed by the courage of the women and men who spoke. I thought these are the real people who love life they are willing to offer that life for a cause, for a change that will improve the life of many, not only of themselves. Then, I was no longer afraid, I was in the midst of a struggling people willing to build and give life to many by giving their

lives for a vision they hope to see concretized someday. I saw in concrete the theory that if there is anyone who will persist in carrying the struggle for revolutionary change, it will be the peasants and workers, men and women together who pay the price of underdevelopment. Once politicized and they critically analyze issues, their action is directed not to simply changing personalities in the government, but addressing issues and policy change.

The theme of the rally was: "pagkain" (food), "lupa" (land), "kalayaan" (freedom), "kapayapaan" (peace). All these themes were developed by the speakers, the slogans, and the streamers of the different sectors. Some of the placards and streamers that the peasants carried were: "Total war ni Cory ibagsak" (Dismantle Cory's total war); "Itaguyod ang PARCODE" (Upheld PARCODE); "Itakwil ang CARP" (Reject CARP); "Itakwil ang LOI" (Reject the Letter of Intent); "Ipaglaban ang tunay na reforma sa lupa" (Fight for genuine land reform); "Alisin ang militarisyon sa kanayunan" (Stop militarization in the rural areas). "Isang taon ng CARP, isang taong pahirap sa kababaihang magbubukid" (One year of CARP, one year of added suffering for peasant women). AMIHAN carried a big streamer, "Kababaihan magkaisa, Ibayong isulong ang tunay na reformang agraryo, Itakwil ang CARP" (Women unite, Together push for true agrarian reform, Reject CARP).

There were many people. The crowd was huge. Ate Ludy, an AMIHAN leader and I estimated it to be at least 5,000-

8,000 people.

After the speeches and songs at Mendiola, the moderator ordered the crowd to disperse, "organized dispersal", an AMIHAN leader told us. Someone announced that we proceed to Mt. Carmel Church in Cubao, Quezon City for the Vigil in memory of the peasants who were massacred at Mendiola in June 22, 1987.

I was impressed by the mobilization and how well-organized the rally was. It ended peacefully, although the military stationed a fire engine which could be used to hose water to the demonstrators and ready with their barricades and arms. The people on the other hand were unarmed, armed only with their ideology and critical stance against the development policies that exploit them and cause their poverty, oppression, and represssion.

I sensed the anger of the people as well as their commitment to bringing about change, their anger against the policies of the present government. I thought that the people's demands were legitimate, they were demands that can change radically the economic and political structures of Philippine society, asking to be heard in official development policies of the government.

June 10 -- I checked the newspapers to see if the big rally was given publicity. Although the day before the rally KMP and AMIHAN and SAMAKANA (an organization of urban poor women) held a press conference as a way to mobilize the media

and promote publicity for the rally and the demands and themes they put forward in this rally, the papers made no mention about it. This was the second activity of the peasants and workers along with AMIHAN and the urban poor women that I have personally witnessed was not accorded due publicity by the institutionalized media. Thus, what the media presents is a Philippine government where the people are all contented about the country's situation, no protest from the grassroots. The protestors had to rely on their own resources to have their voices heard or printed. The street has become their media.

I saw in the rally these components or aspects: education, organization, mobilization. The speeches and leafleting were educative both for the participants of the rally and for the bystanders. Organization -- different organizations were there. It was not only a mass crowd without an organized ideology. Mobilization -- the organizations who participated in the rally were not only coming from Manila but also from the different provinces in Luzon and Visayas. Education, organization, mobilization are the three components of the mass movement of the progressive groups in the Philippines. These are also aspects in the politics of KAMMI and AMIHAN.

The rally also indicated alliance among sectoral organizations. It brought together different organized sectors --workers, peasants, women, urban poor, students/youth, Church people. Although this rally was primarily led by KMP and

AMIHAN, the other sectors supported them because they see the relationship of the problems of the peasantry to their own sectoral concerns: "There will be no genuine industrialization if there will be no genuine agrarian reform. The problems of the peasants are also problems of the workers" -- said a speaker representative from the worker sector. Church sectors, like the Christians for the Realization of a Sovereign Society (CROSS), expressed alliance with the demands of the peasantry. CROSS leafleted a statement as they joined the rally. Their statement, entitled "Struggle of Peasants, Struggle of the Whole Nation", began with a religious perspective on the issue of land:

> "This is the year of your liberation; the slave will go back to his/her own home and the land that was sold will be returned to the original owner." -Leviticus 25:10.
>
> Land, as God's gift to humanity, is a grace for all that all may live fully as human beings. Truly land is a primary source of life for everyone, that is why it is just right that everyone must benefit from it. Land for everyone is a symbol of God's care and love.

It deplored the fact that peasants, who are creators of wealth from the land, have remained poor and the LOI (IMF policies in the Philippines) have exacerbated their poverty. CROSS' statement condemned CARP and suppported PARCODE as an alternative people's agrarian reform:

> In response, the government put up Republic Act 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL), which is just a symbol of a new form of deceit. It does not include in its scope the lands owned by large corporations and businessmen. Its "compensation scheme" is based on the "market value" of land that it is impossible for the peasants to pay for the amortization. Furthermore, there will be no direct transfer of ownership of land, but instead there is what is called

> "profit and production sharing scheme".
>
> An alternative answer of the peasants to the unutil CARL, is the People's Agrarian Reform Code (PARCODE). This is more comprehensive and has the political will to implement direct redistribution of land. Peasants also have persisted in their struggle for what they aspire -- true ownership and control of land that they till, economic security for the people, freedom, democracy, peace and justice in the rural areas.

CROSS concluded in its statement with a challenge to Christians to see the connection of their Faith to the struggles of the peasants: "In the midst of this situation, our faith is challenged as Christians and as Filipinos to be part of the struggle of the peasants. It is only through this vision that we can show to them that we unite with them in their action.

PINALAKAS KA (United Force of Rural Youth), a mass organization of rural youth with national membership in the Philippines, also expressed alliance with the cause of the peasantry during this demonstration. Their statement contained illustrations that tried to appeal to the youth population. The first section of the first page contained an illustration of a little girl giving a public speech criticizing the International Monetary Fund and the Letter of Intent (LOI). It said that:

> the LOI is a set of conditions the IMF puts on the borrowing country before it is granted loans and with it is the promise of the government to comply to such conditions. These conditions are linked with the Memorandum for Economic Policy, also called standby agreement. LOI was signed by Aquino in March 1989 and submitted to the government as a promise that it will comply to the conditions in return for a $1.3 billion loan the government is asking. This is the twentieth agreement that the government has entered with the IMF.

> An economist says that the bad effects of this memorandum will be felt until the end of this century. IMF itself also admits that this will have harmful effects on the poor.

The second section showed illustrations of President Aquino responding to the big question on what benefits the LOI and the IMF program would bring the Filipino people. Aquino was caricatured as asking the people to make sacrifices and be austere as prices go up for "the sake of economic recovery":

> There are many benefits that it can bring, but we have to follow the dictates of the IMF. We need to sacrifice for economic recovery. Since prices will go up we need to be austere. The price of rice will go up, so we have to get used to not eating very much. The price of electricity will also go up so that the National Power Corporation can pay for its loan. So be thrifty with electricity, don't turn on your lights when there is still some daylight, and go to bed early. The price of gasoline, oil and transportation fare will also go up. The government can no longer afford to subsidize. All monies that we can collect will go to loan payment so we could borrow again. There are many more sacrifices I have to ask from you for the sake of economic recovery.

The third section showed a farmer asking President Aquino about what the effects of LOI are to poor peasants. It showed President Aquino responding,

> There are so many effects. First, I decreased the budget for the NFA since the IMF wants that the pricing of rice be left to the forces of the market. This means that the control of trader-usurers in the trading of rice and palay will increase. Most often poor peasants borrow from traders and millers, and they mortgaged to them their shares of the harvests even before harvest time. Because the credit market is left to the free market forces, usurers and creditors will have more freedom to raise their interest. Secondly, LOI also wants that the price of farm equipments and production inputs be raised. LOI deregulates the prices of pesticides, fertilizers, certified seeds, farm machineries, giving the foreign and local monoplies full control of the market in the

> industrial and agricultural sectors. This will further push the peasantry into debt. So, where will they get their payment for land rent? What would happen if this results to the landlord withdrawing the land? Where is then land reform? LOI gets back to the government and to the capitalists whatever raise there is in the workers' wages because taxes and prices of goods will increase.

The fourth section commented on the action of the Aquino government saying that it hurried up to set up the LOI in order to create the conditions necessary for the United States to grant the $10 billion loan which the Philippine government will use to pay its foreign debt and for the implementation of CARL. It further argued that LOI is worse in this sense that it does not only bring more hardship to the poor majority but that it also supports the anti-peasant land reform of the government. This section concluded with a criticism of the loopholes in the Comprenhensive Agrarian Reform Law of the Aquino government:

> With the retention limit of 5 hectares for landlords and 3 hectares for each legitimate heirs, almost 75% of the total agricultural land area will be exempted from CARP. Within ten years there will be no commercial farm lands that will be distributed, instead there is the production or profit sharing scheme.
>
> Payment scheme in CARP is worse. It will be the Department of Agrarian Reform, the Land Bank, and the landlords who will set the price of land according to the current market value plus 6% interest per annum. Concretely it means that the peasants will have to pay P50,000 to P100,000 per hectare for 30 years. Who is the peasant who can afford to pay this price?
>
> Corporate farms (like Hacienda Luisita) are also given up to ten years of grace period to implement CARL. "Stock transfer" takes the place of "land transfer". Even though on paper the peasants are co-owners of the corporate farms, they have no control over the land since they remain as agricultural workers
> and their dividends are too little. Control of the corporate farms remains in the landlords.

> CARL ensures the continued control of multinational corporations and agribusiness on land. Through the leaseback option, big agricultural capitalists can rent land from agricultural workers who are paying amortization to the original owners of the land. But these agricultural workers will continue to work as hired workers in return for the low rent on land. Multinational corporations thus maintain control of land.

Both AMIHAN and KMP (Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas - Peasant Movement of the Philippines), like the other groups, also gave out written statements during the rally both to the demonstrators, bystanders, and motorists. KMP entitled its statement -- "Resist the False Agrarian Reform and Fight Against the Increasing Poverty Under the US-Aquino Regime". AMIHAN entitled hers -- "Carl, A Burden for Peasant Women". While both AMIHAN's and KMP's statements touched on issues that affect the peasantry in general, only AMIHAN touched on the peasant women's particular experience. KMP's statement presented issues in general without specific reference to the particular situation of the peasant women. Hence, without AMIHAN's participation in this rally, peasant women would have been again made invisible in the analysis and public articulation of the impact of development policies and programs on peasant women.

AMIHAN contested the government's claim that the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) was going to be the priority of the Aquino government, when it was signed into law on June 10, 1988:

> June 10, 1988, is a historical day of deceit and disloyalty that the Aquino government has done to all the poor peasants. This was the day when Cory Aquino

signed the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) into law as a major and priority program of the government.

AMIHAN supported its contention by presenting an analysis of CARL: that, like the failure of past land reforms, it is insensitive to the poverty of peasants because it does not operationalize free land distribution to peasants but instead have given more power to the landlords in setting the price of land to be amortized to poor peasants:

> CARL, HAS INCREASED THE EXPLOITATION OF PEASANTS. One year of experience under CARL indicates no hope for progress. It cannot solve the problem of landlessness of more than 8.5 million peasants. Like the other land reform laws in the past, it does not provision for free distribution of land to landless peasants. Peasants will pay for the land to landlords with a price set by landlords and the government. This does not take into consideration the inability of peasants to pay the yearly amortizations due to poverty, consequently ending up to the confiscation of their right to farm on the land.

AMIHAN, furthermore contended that in its one year of implementation CARL has not demonstrated a slight indication towards changing the concentrated control on land by landlords and foreign corporations, but instead it became a scenario of anomalies in which landlords and government officials enriched themselves:

> Furthermore, CARL has many loopholes in its implementation that perpetrates the continuing monopoly control of land by landlords, plantation owners, and foreign corporations.
>
> Corrupt and opportunists in the government have also taken advantage of CARL resulting to graft and corruption, like the case of Hacienda Alberto, Gatchitorena and other confiscated property of Marcos.

AMIHAN's statement did not cite details here of the anomalies, but KMP's statement did. KMP cited Hacienda Luisita, the big

haciendas owned by President Aquino's clan, as the first anomaly in CARL. KMP exposed the devaluing of one-third of the Hacienda Luisita's land assets that President Aquino claimed she was going to the distribute to the agricultural workers on her hacienda through a stock sharing scheme, therefore charging her of "cheating" the peasants. KMP rejected Aquino's claim on Hacienda Luisita as a "model agrarian reform", because of this anomaly and because the stock sharing scheme does not actually transfer ownership and control of land to peasants:

> The weaknesses of Aquino's agrarian reform, on which the crocodiles in and outside the government are feasting, has been uncovered. Because of its comprehensive loopholes that allow the profiteers to exploit CARL, awful anomalies are what the Aquino regime can boost about in this first anniversary of CARL. First, is the anomaly in Hacienda Luisita. Does the government have the face to boast this as a model agrarian reform when in fact this is just a grand show to cheat the people about their circumventing the distribution of large tracts of land of the Cojuangcos and to hide the real value of their stolen assets from the agricultural workers in their sugar plantation? In the scheme of stock distribution of CARL, only one third of the whole value of land assets of Hacienda Luisita will be distributed to its agricultural workers based on the value of P33,000/ha. when in fact the actual value is close to P60,000/ha. About 162 million pesos has been hidden and taken from the workers of Hacienda Luisita by the relatives of President Aquino who are owners of this hacienda.

KMP's statement also cited details on the government corruption in the Garchitorena Land Deal: this time the anomaly is not in the form of devaluing the land assets, but rather there was the extreme overpricing of barren, cogonal lands that landlords sold to the government:

> The other anomaly is the overpricing of lands that were being sold to the government by landlords. The Garchitorena Land Deal is one example. If in Hacienda Luisita there was the undervaluing of the real price of land in order to decrease the size of stocks for distribution to the beneficiaries, in the Garchitorena Land Deal there was the 80-90% overpricing of barren, inutil and cogonal land sold to the government supposedly to be distributed to the peasants. The Department of Agrarian Reform agreed to buy the land at 33,000 pesos per hectare when in fact the actual price was less than 5,000 pesos per hectare.

In the midst of all these corruption in CARL, KMP further exposed that the government budget for the implementation of CARL had been increased while there was a decrease in the size of sequestered lands identified supposedly for distribution to the peasants:

> Under all these anomalies it is not surprising that the bankrupt CARL has inflated its budget from 120 billion pesos in 1988 to 330 billion pesos currently. The other miracle that happened is the decrease in the size of sequestered land identified for distribution to the peasants. From 60,000 hectares last April 1987, it deceased to 2,500 hectares. Where did the rest of the lands go?

While the experience of landowners and state officials with CARL was one of taking advantage of its loopholes, AMIHAN contested that, in the experience of peasant women, CARL has even more "enslaved" the peasant women:

> CARL, HAS FURTHER ENSLAVED PEASANT WOMEN. If this law has further entrenched the exploited position of poor peasants, it is even more perpetuating the slavery of peasant women. The Aquino government has shown no serious desire to liberate from poverty and oppression the majority of women who are part of the peasant class in the Philippines. Landlords and capitalists view peasant women as slaves who are paid a wage, slaves who pay rent to their land, slaves whose labor could be used as payment for debt, and slaves to their flesh.

AMIHAN asserted that CARL perpetuates the "enslavement" of

women because it maintains the invisibility and devaluing of women's significant contribution in production and their major role in the survival of peasant families:

> It maintains the position of peasant women only as supplier of supplemental labor in production, source of cheap and unpaid labor, although in reality they do major roles in the production process.
>
> Peasant women carry most of the burden for the survival needs of peasant families, such as inadequate food, housing, social services. Oftentimes, to survive they fall into debt bondage.

AMIHAN also discredited the empowering element of CARL since it is introduced along with intensification of militarization in the countryside, exacerbating the misery of peasant women:

> CARL AND TOTAL WAR, COMBINED TOOLS FOR EXPLOITATION AND REPRESSION IN THE RURAL AREAS. While the Aquino government entices the peasants with sweet promises, it responds to peasants' resistance and protests with an iron hand. Zoning, hamletting, foodblockade, strafing, bombings, salvaging and other forms of militarization continue. This is an added suffering for women. They are the ones who are left in the farm, who suffer the military's anger, experience sexual abuse, hunger, and family dislocation.

Furthermore, AMIHAN questioned the effectivity of CARL when it looks at it within the development framework of the government's economic program that opens the Philippine natural resources and its market for the exploitation of foreign investors:

> CARL, IS PART OF THE DEFECTIVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM OF THE AQUINO GOVERNMENT. This is one way to maintain the Philippines as a source of cheap raw materials and a market for finished or manufactured products of big foreign capitalists. It has given incentives and security to big foreign capitalists to build and manage large plantations, mines, fisheries, etc. in the rural areas.

Such development framework, AMIHAN asserts, does not result to "economic progress" for poor peasants:

> This system always results to foreign trade imbalance since it is the foreign capitalists who are able to set the price and quantity of export goods. Consequently, this brings no economic progress to the Philippines. The effects of this situation falls on the shoulders of poor peasants and citizens, like what has happened in Negros.

AMIHAN, pointed out the role of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in promoting this externally-controlled economic program and its negative impact on the peasantry and poor majority:

> While the persistent trade imbalance and foreign debt continues to plague the country, this is worsen by the government's implementation of LOI and the dictates of the IMF-World Bank which is primarily controlled by imperialist United States. The bad effects of this can be immediately felt in the price increase of basic goods and services, tax hikes, increase in the prices of pesticides and other needs for agricultural production, and others. On the whole, the economic program of the Aquino government is favorable only to big landlords, foreign capitalists, and big Filipino capitalists.

AMIHAN's contestation of the government's agrarian development policies and programs did not only consist of criticism. AMIHAN also offered alternatives -- free redistribution of lands to peasants, restrictions on foreign corporations and plantations, public subsidy for peasants' production, democratic participation of peasants in policy formulation:

> GENUINE AND COMPREHENSIVE AGRARIAN REFORM, NOT CARL, IS THE DEMAND OF PEASANTS. It is but just that lands taken away from peasants be distributed freely; large lands under the monopoly control of big landlords that have long been paid for by the taxes of peasants; idle lands; lands confiscated from Marcos and his cronies, and the

> nationalization of foreign corporations and plantations. It is but right that peasants have a say in the formulation of policies that affect their lives. It is but just that the government provide production subsidy to peasants.
>
> Land to the tiller, this is what will gradually liberate the poor peasants, most especially the women. It will slowly dismantle the feudal system that exploits and oppresses the peasant women. That is why it is their primary interest to struggle for genuine and truly comprehensive agrarian reform.

But AMIHAN expressed that this alternative will not come from the top of the power pyramid, hence it called for the united action of all peasants and women and the support of all sectors and classes in Philippine society:

> All of these can be achieved only with the united action of all peasants and the support of all classes and sectors in our society.
>
> WOMEN UNITE!
> SUSTAIN THE STRUGGLE FOR GENUINE AGRARIAN REFORM!
> JOIN THE MOVEMENT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PEASANTS AND WOMEN!!!
> REJECT CARL AND TRASH LOI
> FIGHT AGAINST INCREASING POVERTY UNDER THE U.S.-AQUINO REGIME !!!

These two accounts on the demonstrations that AMIHAN participated in show that demontrations as part of popular politics do not only become a public context in which AMIHAN can contest development policies based on the peasant women's experience, but also they become occasions for AMIHAN to offer its alternative concept of agrarian development and an analysis that makes peasant women more visible. Issues that AMIHAN brings out in public are issues that are also collectively studied and analyzed in its internal politics, both on the local and national level. Mass demonstrations

therefore go beyond sloganeering the way the media sometimes presents and are not simply sporadic outburst of emotional anger against the existing system, but are indicators of the peasant women's and other sectors' organized resistance to the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines. At the same time this politics of underdevelopment also shapes AMIHAN's local and national politics of resistance.

While mass demonstrations that dramatize issues publically is part of the national politics of AMIHAN, KAMMI as a local chapter refrained at the time of fieldwork from organizing mass demonstrations in Mindoro. While in Manila mass demonstrations were frequent, in Mindoro it was not as a consequence of the 1987 military harassment directed against the local chapter of KMP in Mindoro. That mass demonstrations in Mindoro ceased after the harassment does not, however, indicate that there is no resistance in this part of the country. In fact, in my examination of KAMMI's local politics (recall chapter 5) show that it is in the local level where issues and alternative development policies, that are publically articulated in mass demonstrations, are concretized and implemented. The alternative agrarian reform proposed by AMIHAN, such as redistribution of land to the tiller, is actually already being implemented at the village level by AMIHAN and KMP with their strategy of land occupation. Hence, the alternative agrarian reform that AMIHAN and KMP publically articulated in these demonstrations are actually already being

done by them. But the problem is that the government has not yet legitimized such grassroot-initiated policy and development change, but instead represses them. Thus, AMIHAN's national politics is directed at demanding national legitimation of these peasant initiatives already taking place at the local level as well as creating the national organizational mechanism for democratic participation of peasant women in formulating and concretizing development policy changes. AMIHAN's national politics, therefore, supports local politics which is the base of grassroot democratization essential in the struggle of the whole peasantry as well as in the national liberation struggle. Both local and national politics do not view peasant women's distinct organization as dividing the peasant or national liberation movement, but rather strengthens it and contributes to its democratization.

International Solidarity

Since the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines has global connections, AMIHAN's national politics of resistance goes beyond national borders. AMIHAN sees the importance of establishing international solidarity network with women's organizations and other justice and peace groups in other countries both in the Third World and in the First World. This is a way to build awareness of the global connection between the situation of peasant women in the

Philippines and those in other parts of the world, especially Asia. Through its international solidarity network with women's organizations in the First World AMIHAN expects to build awareness of First World policies that impact on the lives of peasant women in the Philippines. Through its international network, AMIHAN also is able to mobilize external support and resources that can advance its struggle.

During my fieldwork, I have observed that AMIHAN facilitated the exposure of three peasant women from Malaysia, who also joined the mass demonstration on June 9/89 that was spearheaded by AMIHAN and KMP. AMIHAN also sent Ate Loy in 1988 to Europe for a speaking tour, and lately she also got invitation for a speaking tour in Canada by the Philippine-Canadian Human Resouce Development.

Part of the willingness of AMIHAN, to cooperate in my research was that it also considered it part of their international solidarity work. AMIHAN expects that this research is not only going to be useful to them, but also that it will contribute in educating people in this country about their situation. In fact, AMIHAN National Office expects that a continuing relationship result from this research collaboration. This challenges the positivist methodological principles that includes how a researcher could terminate her/his relationship with the research subject. Part of the concept of "feminist organic inquiry", that I discussed in chapter 2, considers how to creatively continue the

relationship between the researcher and her/his research collaborators. I willingly accepted AMIHAN's expectation for a continuing relationship since I consider this research not only to meet an academic requirement but also as part of my concern for social justice that I would like to integrate into my professional scholarship in sociology. (This is probably the reason that despite the sufferings and little financial support I have experienced in doing this research, I have not yet given it up). After my fieldwork, while doing this writing, I continued connection with AMIHAN and KAMMI. As a gesture of solidarity, I accepted invitations to speak about Philippine politics and the women's resistance, in which I always mentioned AMIHAN, and sent them the honoraria I received, for which they were very grateful.

International solidarity networking is a task done usually by national leaders who are full-time organizers than by local leaders who must combine family, farm, and organizing work. Local chapters, like KAMMI, do not do direct international solidarity work, they get to meet international visitors if their local chapter gets to facilitate village exposure for people who become part of AMIHAN's international network.

Postcript: Documentation/Participatory Research, Response to Mt. Pinatubo Damage, Campaign for the Witdrawal of the U.S. Bases

At the time I was completing this chapter, I received

from Ka Laly, one of the national leaders of AMIHAN, a letter (dated September 18, 1991) along with 3 issues of Pagsibol, AMIHAN's official national newsletter, which updated me of the current major projects of AMIHAN. I briefly touched on these projects in the following discussion to show the continuing struggle of the peasant women.

Documentation and participatory research. AMIHAN's national politics recognizes the importance of on-going research and documentation on peasant women's experiences as they are affected by national and global agricultural, economic policies. Hence, contrary to the stereotype that political groups are not concerned about research, AMIHAN integrates participatory research and documentation in its work. For example, Ka Laly writes about the three participatory research projects that AMIHAN is currently conducting:

> At this time we are focused on three important research projects on peasant women. The first is a participatory research on the different experiences of the local chapters in organizing and running socio-economic projects, which could serve as basis of our future action and planning. We have just finished doing it in Cebu, Isabela, and Cavite. We will do this with all the local chapters in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao regions. The second participatory research project is on the impact of the structural adjustment policies of the IMF-World Bank on the peasant women. And the third participatory research project is related to Agrarian Reform -- how the Aquino government implements its CARL (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law) in contrast to how CPAR (Congress for A People's Agrarian Reform) implements its PARCODE (People's Agrarian Reform Code) as the peasants' alternative to CARL. Do they respond to the problems and issues particular to peasant women? How do they view the peasant women's situation? How do peasant women have access and control in production and reproduction.

This testinomy shows that AMIHAN views participatory research as an important component of its on-going struggle to understand development issues and their connections to peasant women's lives. Such understanding provides the basis for their organizational decisions and strategies of change.

How AMIHAN does participatory research is something I have not observed during my fieldwork. I did not hear the national leaders talk about it during my fieldwork, so I have no data to elaborate on this here. However, this postcript information show that this is being done now by AMIHAN, and thus future research agenda could perhaps take a look at AMIHAN's model of participatory research. Recently, some western feminist scholars have began talking about participatory research as a feminist reseach methodology. The idea of participatory research began in the Philippines much earlier, even way back in the mid-70's, almost two decades before feminist scholars in the U.S. began talking about it. Indeed, First World sociologists and Third World sociologists have so much to learn from each other, but Third World studies is still a marginal if not a neglected area in mainstream western sociology as well as western feminist scholarship. Beginning scholars, like me, in this area still feel loneliness and isolation in pursuing such scholarly concerns.

Response to Mt. Pinatubo eruption. On June 12, 1991 Mt.

Pinatubo, which has been dormant for more than 600 years, erupted causing tremendous destruction to human lives and property especially in the Central Luzon provinces, like Zambales, Tarlac, Bataan and Pampanga. Filipino geologists predicted the eruption to continue for three months to three years. They also predict that it would take 15-20 years for the Philippines to recover from its damage. Lands destroyed by the eruption would be inutil for at least 15 years. Peasants in the affected areas certainly would feel the impact of this in their livelihood. In response to this situation, AMIHAN began organizing new local chapters and relief action in the areas damaged by the eruption: Zambales, Pampanga, Bataan, and Tarlac. Ka Laly wrote:

> Another project that we are currently working on is the setting up of new local chapters in areas that experienced damage from the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. We give study sessions ("pag-aaral") among the peasant women here as well as provide Relief Goods for the victims, because they need very badly things like clothes, medicines, food, and sources of income.

Campaign For the U.S. Bases Withdrawal: Some Success, But Struggle Continues. In chapter 3, I mentioned that the maintenance of the U.S. bases in the Philippines is one of the interlocking patterns of U.S. neo-colonialism and interventionism in the Philippines. The U.S. bases in the Philippines which was set by the U.S. government as a condition for the granting of Philippine political independence in 1946 was to expire in September 16, 1991. The U.S. government had always renegotiated for the extension

of the bases at least 3 times, the last regotiation (before 1991) was in 1979, when it was also supposed to expire. AMIHAN was among the various organizations in the Philippines that participated in the campaign for the withdrawal of the U.S. bases in the Philippines, and for the non-renewal of the Military Base Agreement, which gives the U.S. government parity rights to maintain military bases in the Philippines. In this anti-base mass campaign, an alternative use of the lands occupied by the U.S. bases was promoted: its coversion to productive purposes, such as converting them to commercial center and a port for ship repair and ship-building, that would not only bring in more revenue but would also provide decent jobs for poor women, who are sexually exploited by the local and foreign businessmen who control the prostitution ring around the bases.

In retrospect of chapter 2, I mentioned that the early Filipinos were skilled ship-builders, but their ship-building industry was subdued under colonialism. Hence, the alternative to convert the U.S. bases into ship-building and ship-repair center, is in a sense an attempt to recapture and redevelop an economic prowess that turned into maldevelopment as external and internal factors interplayed in the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines.

AMIHAN sees the connection between the sexual economy around the U.S. bases and the rural poverty mostly felt by peasant families. For example, the national vice-chairperson

of AMIHAN, Ka Tesa, says:

> There is the peasant women's issue in the U.S. bases. Most of those women who become prostitutes come from very poor peasant families. They do not enjoy being prostitutes and they are not proud of this. If we dismantle the U.S. bases here and turn the area into other economic activities, such as a commercial center and a port for ship repair and ship-building, then our men and women will have decent jobs. The presence of the U.S. bases here is an insult to our Filipino sovereignty ("kalayaan"), a sign of U.S. imperialism ("imperialismong Kano").

Thus, AMIHAN rejoiced when 12 Filipino Senators voted against the renewal of the U.S. bases in the Philippines on September 16, 1991. They felt that this was some victory and success of their campaign. For example, Ka Laly writes me:

> I have good news for you. We had some victory in our struggle for the dismantling of the American bases here. Twelve Senators rejected the new base treaty last September 16. There was a big demonstration last September 10 and September 16 here in Manila, approximately 60, 000 anti-base people. We won, right? But Aquino is not agreeing to the removal of the U.S. bases.

On the other hand, the U.S. government has also tried to maneuver the decision of the Philippine Senate by renegotiating with President Aguino. There is no clear plan on the part of the U.S. government to withdraw the U.S. bases within the period stipulated by the Philippine Senate. U.S. Senator Paul Simon, in fact, withdrew its intial plan to propose to the U.S. Senate for the immediate withdrawal of the U.S. bases in the Philippines.

Hence, the struggle continues, and in this continuing struggle AMIHAN has opted to play a resistant role, than a subjected place, in this politics of underdevelopment that

negatively impact on the peasant women's everyday lives and other poor sectors of Philippine society.

Jeanne Bisilliat and Michele Fieloux's in their Women of the Third World:Work and Daily Life (1987) concluded from their cross-study of women in Asia, Africa and Latin America that Third World women's work and everyday lives "are generally based on their ignorance" (p.82) and that this ignorance is a product of the "capitalist world" which "has insulated women so that they have remained unconscious" (p.83). My study however, shows that while it is true that the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines (of which world capitalism is a part) exploits the peasant women, they are also resisting and their consciousness and understanding about development policies grow as they come together to change their situation. Both the local and national politics of AMIHAN show that peasant women have a sense of who and what is exploiting them and the impact of development policies in their everyday lives both as women and as peasants. It is a testimony of their claim for a fair recognition of their place in this politics of underdevelopment and the central role of the peasant women's empowerment in the process of agrarian change and in the overall movement for change in the Philippines. This resistance shows that there is internal and external imposition of economic and political policies on the people, but at the same time this resistance also shows that this imposition is not fully completed. Both local and

national politics show that there is an alternative change agenda from below, but it is precluded from coming to full fruition as official development policies of the Philippine state and core imperial states come in conflict with this change agenda. The state therefore also becomes problematic and becomes an arena of contention. This structural conflict can be resolved through the formation of a new Philippine state that will legitimize radical demands of the peasant women and other poor sectors of Philippine society. When will the Filipino people succeed in forming a new state is difficult to predict, but my examination of the local politics of KAMMI and the national politics of AMIHAN shows that the seeds of change have already germinated and in process.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary and Theoretical Implications

In this study I make an attempt to understand and explain the politics of underdevelopment and resistance in the Philippines beginning from the experience of organized Filipino poor peasant women, since majority of the women in the Philippines are peasants who are poor. My approach was influenced by Dorothy Smith's concept of "institutional ethnography" in which she suggests that the problematic of a feminist inquiry begins from and is established by women in their everyday lives. The sociologist contributes her skills to situating these questions and problems within the larger structures in which the women's lives are enmeshed (Smith 1988). My approach also draws upon Gita Sen and Caren Grown, who argue that "when we start from the perspective of poor Third World women, we give a much needed reorientation to development analysis" (Sen and Grown 1987, 18). Since poor Third World women comprise the majority of the poor, who suffer economic and social disadvantages, including gendered forms of domination, there is every reason to make their experience the "vantage point" (Sen and Grown 1987, 23) from which to examine the politics of development and

underedevelopment in the Third World.

My examination of the everyday lives of the peasant women of KAMMI as a way to understand and explain the complex dynamics of underdevelopment and resistance in the Philippines, helped me to reorient development analysis. It revealed interlocking power structures into which the peasant women's lives are enmeshed which I would have missed if I merely looked at the decline and rise of Philippine GNP as indicator of development or underdevelopment.

My examination of the everyday lives of the peasant women of KAMMI supports the emerging literature on women and development that is critical of the "integrationist perspective". While this perspective assumes that Third World women are poor because they are not integrated into development, my examination of the lives of the peasant women of KAMMI suggests that they are poor not because they are not integrated in Philippine development, because in fact they are. Rather their poverty is a consequence of the nature of Philippine development which exploits their productive, reproductive, and consumer roles in order to maintain and reproduce a political economic system that a) concentrates ownership and control of land and agricultural labor in a few who do not till the land, b) concentrates control of the produce of the land on non-producers, c) gears an agricultural development that is linked to transnationalization of capital accumulation, d) thrives on gendered hierarchies, and e) feeds

a military state that represses political action for change. The resulting poverty that grows from this development in turn reproduces the social condition that makes the peasant women vulnerable to exploitation in economic relations.

The dynamics of this exploitation is particularly and concretely articulated in the lives of the peasant women of KAMMI who are mostly landless peasant women who either work as tenants or waged agricultural workers on lands owned by landlords who either live in or outside Mindoro. As rice producers who till lands they do not own, the peasant women who are tenants turn a large portion of their harvest to landlords, leaving little harvest for themselves that is insufficient for their subsistence and other basic needs. The peasant women who work as waged agricultural workers do not get a share of the harvest, but are paid very low wages, and have no quarantee of work. There are tenant women who, after working their landlords' fields, also work as wage agricultural workers in lands owned by other landlords to supplement their insufficient share of harvest from tenancy farming. But even with this double work shift they remain poor. This phenomenon raises serious questions about the integrationist perspective on women and development which assumes that Third World women are poor because they are not integrated into the wage economy. Both in the feudal and the wage economy, the peasant women of KAMMI are made poor. But they are not simply made poor in parallel ways. It is

the peasant women's labor that links the different modes of production -- feudal, semi-feudal, and capitalist -- in the neo-colonial Philippine economy. This modifies Ernesto Laclau's theory (Chilcote 1984; Brewer 1982) of the co-existence of different modes of production in Third World economies, that results from colonial, transnational capital interlocking into pre-existing economic relations, that did not consider the particular place of peasant women. When viewed within the sexual division of labor in farm work, the nexus of exploitation that the peasant women provide in this articulation of the different modes of production, takes a more complex form when the more back-breaking tasks are generally relegated to the peasant women. This indicates the intersection of gender and class in their lives. Furthermore, the gender ideologies, that gave rise to the concept of peasant mainly as male, makes invisible peasant women's significant contributions to production as unpaid wives, while helping to define peasant women's paid farm work as secondary. This double or triple exploitation of the peasant women in the feudal, semi-feudal, and capitalist economic relations results in their poverty.

A closer examination reveals that there is something peculiar about the peasant women's poverty since it does not manifest itself only as a direct outcome of their class position in the relations of agricultural production -- in this case production of rice and the landlord system. There

is also a relationship between the poverty of the peasant women, their role as consumers of rice (their produce over which they do not have control), and the informal credit system (usury) that thrives on the poverty of peasant families and the lack of government subsidy on peasant food production. While the peasant women produce quality rice they cannot be full consumers of such quality rice, not only because traders and landlord traders market such quality rice outside Mindoro, but also because the peasant women are made to consume poor quality rice that landlords and traders cannot sell to the rich. This further exploitation is managed through the system of usury, which the peasant women resort to as source of production capital because of the absence of state subsidies on food production. It is also the women's survival strategy during "tagkiriwi" (months when they are most poor). Since the peasant women pay their loans in the form of good quality rice, money lenders who are also either landlords, traders, or landlord-trader are able to accumulate rice for the market. Landless peasant women again become the means to link poverty, usury, and the market as they, more than the men, are involved with informal credit transactions. In the final analysis the peasant women subsidize rice production and rice marketing that has become the source of profit for the few big landlords and the traders who control the rice market and the informal credit system. This dynamic is very different from the rationalization of the market conceptualized by Max Weber.

Instead it suggests the importance of examining the links between the capitalist market, feudal and semi-feudal relations of production and the informal sector in the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines. These elements come together most fully and clearly in the everyday lives of the peasant women of Mindoro.

The Philippine government, through "state action" (Mackintosh 1990), participates in maintaining the exploitative terms of farm production within the feudal and semi-feudal village economy and the capitalist rice market that exploits the peasant women. This "state action" in the everyday lives of the peasant women is epitomized in the reluctance of past and present governments to legislate and implement genuine agrarian reforms that will radically transform the structure of landownership that reduces the peasant women to landless peasants. This "state action" is also manifested in the recent decision of the Aquino government to decrease support for the National Food Authority to procure rice. This decision capitulated to the IMF's package of conditions for the granting of loans which included a privatization scheme which allowed more freedom for big rice traders to control the marketing of rice. This "state action" also takes the form of the absence of government subsidy for the production needs of the peasant women. While big traders and landlord-usurers have access to formal credit systems, such as the Quedan Financing Scheme, the peasant women

generally have none.

Beneria's productive/reproductive model, which emerged as an alternative analytical tool to the integrationist perspective, finds support in my analysis of the politics of underdevelopment in the peasant women's everyday lives. The peasant women's view that the "center" of their lives is the "farm" and the "home" is their interpretation of the concrete reality of their lives. But the "farm" and the "home" are not two dichotomized spheres as the integrationist perspective implies or as conceptualized in the liberal feminist view of sexual division of labor that does not have a clear analysis of how women's reproductive role is linked to the politics of farm work. It is the social construction of the "farm" and the "home" as the "center" of the peasant women's lives that links the home to the economy, but in a way in which the peasant women's reproductive role maintains and reproduces the system that exploits peasant women and men as landless producers. While they create food resource that does not return to them, they enrich a few who own and control most of the land and its produce. This process is particularly articulated in the following ways: a) the peasant women maintains and reproduces the labour power in the feudal and semi-feudal economy of Mindoro as their children generally also become peasants, b) the peasant women's children render labor in the farm, but remain unpaid as this is not considered in crop-sharing, c) the peasant women do domestic work related

to farm work but it is unrecognized as this is not considered in the allocation of harvest in crop-sharing.

The peasant women's reproductive work does not only maintain the feudal and semi-feudal economy, but also subsidizes the household economy that is linked to capitalist production. This is particularly so when daughters of peasant women become low-paid domestic workers in the households of wage workers employed outside the village. Hence, it is not only the peasant women's farm work that connects different modes of production, but also their social reproductive work.

Beneria's productive/reproductive analysis does not consider the ways on how women's productive and reproductive roles can be enmeshed in the politics of a militaristic state. However, this model can be useful for understanding how militarization affects peasant women's lives in the Third World. Not only are the peasant women victimized by military operations that affect their farm work, family, and organizations, but they are also made to participate in the social maintenance of the military that represses them and the village community. This diverts the peasant women's meager resources (like food) from their full subsistence adding more pressures to their already difficult situation. This doubly oppresses them since this is a way to subtly manage their consent to the existing social order that exploits and represses them.

Furthermore, the state, by its neglect in providing

adequate social services in the village, passes on to the peasant women's productive and reproductive role the unsubsidized care for the retired labour force (the elderly) and the reserved labour force (the young).

While Kerkvliet (1990) (whose work I referred to in chapter 5) looks at his San Ricardo as a Philippine village in itself, my examination of the everyday lives of the peasant women of KAMMI reveals that the village economy is not isolated from the national or the global political economy. It is in the peasant women's work, their place in the market, in their reproductive role that we find the exploitative connection of transnational capital and the village economy. This is particularly expressed, embodied in a) the negative impact of the Green Revolution on their farm work and ecology, b) the way that peasant women experience the negative impact of the IMF's tied aid, such as in the increase in the price of rice, c) their part in the exportation of rice to pay foreign debt, d) the support of the United States for militarization in the Philippines through military aid and through direct involvement in counter-insurgency that bring tremendous difficulties in the women's lives.

These interlocking power structures in the present everyday lives of the peasant women have historical roots. Their present lives are rooted in and support Philippine colonial past and its neo-colonial present. The dynamics of Philippine colonial history (which I have analyzed in chapter

3) continues to reverberate in the peasant women's lives.

However, despite these complex realities, that make the peasant women poor, exploited, and repressed, they have chosen resistance than submission. Defying Bisilliat and Fieloux's depiction of Third World women as simply victims of underdevelopment (1987), and Oscar Lewis' fatalistic "culture of poverty", the peasant women of KAMMI have developed a culture of resistance. Like the Salvadoran women in Renny Golden's The Hour of the Poor, the Hour of Women (1991), the South African women in Diana Russel's Lives of Courage (1989), and the Mozambican women in Stephanie Urdang's And Still They Dance (1989), the peasant women of KAMMI and AMIHAN challenge their exploitation and repression. They are not passive victims of underdevelopment in the Philippines. Showing tremendous courage against the forces of greed and militarization they are claiming a place in the transforming social order. Part of their politics for change is to tell their story, to offer analysis based on their experience when talking about the national situation and the peasantry in the Philippines. My research is conceived as part of their project to tell their story and be heard. It begins an examination of the politics of underdevelopment and resistance in the Philippines from their experience. Their politics, thus, provides a rationale for the methodology I employed in this research, which I tentatively call in chapter 2, organic feminist inquiry.

Unlike the unorganized peasant resistance in the village of Sedaka studied by James Scott (1985), the peasant women of Mindoro engage in organized resistance as part of their everyday life. This organized resistance of KAMMI and AMIHAN is making the peasant women more visible. The revival and the re-organization of KAMMI after the 1987 systematic harassment of KMP-Mindoro, dominated by male leadership, brought the peasant women to the fore as they opted to separate from KMP. The formation of AMIHAN as a national federation, distinct from the national federation of KMP, brought the peasant women's voices in the villages to the national arena and into the broader movement for change in the Philippines.

An examination of the politics of KAMMI and AMIHAN shows that the politics of underdevelopment in the peasant women's lives are central to creating the pre-conditions for their organized resistance, but it is the peasant women's volition that brings life to their collective action. Their orgnization is their "defense" against the divisive tactics of the politics of repression and gives them a "collective voice" for their claims. Their land occupation is their radical alternative to the structure of landownership that denies them the basic right to own land, a right which they believe springs from their being tillers of the land. Their cooperative income-generating projects are responses to their inadequate income and poverty. Their collective child care projects resist the privatization of their reproductive roles.

Their "campaign" for wage increases is their attempt to take control of their labor. Their consumer cooperatives are their response to the anarchic market and their attempt to establish credit cooperatives resists the exploitative usury to which they have been subjected. Their struggle to protect their "suyuan", an indigenous collective form of organizing work, from being exploited by landlords opposes the capitalist penetration of communal forms of work still existing in their village. Their experiment on bringing back the traditional rice hybrid rejects the development ideology behind the externally-controlled Green Revolution and its negative impact on their farm work. Their deliberations and political position on foreign debt and IMF policies denounce forms of economic imperialism that infringe on their ability to meet their basic needs. Their village health-care projects that harness local resources counteract dependency that results from a neo-colonial political economy and provide an alternative to the absence of government-subsidized social services in the village. Their "pag-aaral" (education/study sessions) where they discuss and analyze development issues opposes ideological control of information by the repressive state. Their leadership training is part of the struggle to make themselves visible in the community and within the male-dominated peasant movement. Their mass demonstrations publically express their collective demands and political stance on development issues affecting their everyday lives,

contesting the state's official development policies which attempt to make such demands unthinkable.

These forms of resistance imply the need to reconceptualize development paradigms, such as Modernization and the integrationist perspective on women and development, outside the experience of peasants, workers, women, men and children in the Third World. AMIHAN's rejection of PDPW (Philippine Development Plan for Women), premised on the integrationist perspective, is the outcome of such rethinking. KAMMI's and AMIHAN's alternative agrarian reform program is an alternative development perspective that begins from the experiences of peasant women, who comprise the majority of the women in the Philippines and in the Third World. Their politics of resistance and change agenda offers a grounded reconceptualization of development as empowerment that Audrey Bronstein (1982), Peggy Antrobus (1989), Gita Sen and Caren Grown (1987), and other Third World feminist scholars have began to identify. Reconceptualizing development as empowerment is an important task in feminist scholarship with policy implications for the everyday lives of Third World poor women. In this reconceptualization from the perspective of poor Third World women, it is these women who become the theorists of empowerment, based on their history, experience and struggle. One of the national leaders of AMIHAN, states this idea eloquently in her speech during one of her international solidarity tours abroad:

> Empowerment for us in AMIHAN means equality and autonomy. . . . By equality we mean here that as human beings the peasant women should be given all the rights and responsibilities accorded to our male peasants. We therefore are claiming equal rights to resources such as land, capital, and information. And by autonomy we mean spaces for us peasant women to express and realize our dreams and aspirations towards the greater goal of the attainment of genuine agrarian reform and the emancipation of our country from foreign domination (AMIHAN 1991, 6).

She explains strategies for empowering peasant women:

> We are organizing separately (italics mine) organizations of peasant women not to compete or fight with the male peasants, but because we only wanted us peasant women to define among ourselves what it is that we want, what we think must be accorded to us as human beings. We do organizing of peasant women for we believe that only through organization can they achieve our rights and demands. We do education work among peasant women for we believe that that in itself is empowerment. Our advocay work is aimed at propagating the issues of the peasant women to the greatest number of people possible and which consequently would generate the much needed support for the cause of the peasant women. We in the recent years have women to help support, however meager, the economic needs of the peasant women (AMIHAN 1991, 7).

This grassroots conceptualization of empowerment is one from which feminist scholarship on women in development can begin to elaborate. This theoretical task, however, has methodological implications. It calls for methodological tools that redefine concepts to "reflect women's reality" more visibly (Antrobus 1989, 194) and deconstruct theories imbedded in studies premised on development perspectives that have evolved outside Third World women's experience. It calls for creative fieldwork that can be employed in the militarized zones of most Third World nations. In this study, despite its limitations, I have attempted to address this theoretical and

methodological challenge.

Avenues for Future Research

This study points to several postulates for future research. One important task is to compare the resistance of KMK (the Federation of Women Workers) in urban areas with AMIHAN. Another is to compare how community life develops in the lands acquired through land occupation by the local chapters of AMIHAN in different parts of the Philippines. A comparison with women workers and their resistance in transnational corporations in the Philippines is also warranted, as are comparative case studies of women's political organizations in Southeast Asia and the Third World. An on-going task is to document Third World human rights violations and its impact on local communities. This kind of research is especially promising for academic solidarity work with Third World women whose everyday lives are threatened by militarization.

Organizational Implications

Although I feel that the peasant women of KAMMI and AMIHAN are the best people to draw out the organizational implications of this study within the spirit of feminist inquiry that I want to evolve further, I see some organizational implications of some findings. I share it here as an open-ended section.

1. The lack of financial resources of beginning village chapters in their organizational work and in maintaining their beginning socio-economic projects is a very real problem. Their local efforts must be funded.

2. Male and female activists involved in the Philippine national liberation movement who still believe that bringing in the feminist perspective or the woman's question in the movement must learn from KAMMI and AMIHAN's experience and perspective that this does not divide the movement, but instead expands and democratizes it.

3. National liberation analysts, male or female, regardless of their organizational affiliation must incorporate in their analysis of Philippine national situation a feminist perspective that makes the particular situation of poor peasant women more visible, since they comprise the majority of women in the Philippines. Analysis has policy and organizational implications, hence, an important political task.

4. Spokespersons of the women's movement in the Philippines must begin their analysis of the situation of poor women, such as poor peasant women, since they comprise the bulk of the women in the Philippines. Analysis on the intersection of gender and class, as they are particularly and specifically articulated in the lives of poor women, must be emphasized. This way the tendency to homogenize the "Filipino woman" can be avoided.

5. The national liberation movement in the Philippines, which is still largely dominated by male leadership, must confront the important issue that there can be no genuine liberation without simultaneously resolving the woman question. Mobilizing women, especially poor women, to support a movement that marginalizes their analysis and experience is unlikely to create a truly participative process of change.

6. Those involved in the women's movement in any way and women's organizations in the Philippines, must confront the crucial issue that if their work does not address a Philippine development that does not liberate poor women from their poverty, expolitation, and repression and how they particularly experience these problems because of their gender, is not genuinely liberatory. To recognize the class differences among women and see how these class differences make them experience the politics of underdevelopment and resistance in the Philippines in particular ways (with recognition of their differences and similarities), is not to divide the women's movement. It will bridge the existing gaps and divisions among women, thus strengthen it. It will help prioritize concerns and provide insight into the allocation of the movement's limited resources.

Policy Implications

The complex dynamics of the interlocking power structures in the everyday lives of the peasant women -- that results to

their being poor, exploited, and repressed -- implies the need for a feminist and integrated approach to agrarian development. Current development policies and programs, both on the national and international levels, must be redefined and reformulated to incorporate responses that will facilitate the empowerment of Filipino peasant women beginning from their experience and perspectives. Development packages premised from the integrationist perspective on women and development must be reassessed with the genuine participation of peasant women.

This study also suggests that U.S. foreign policy on the Philippines has reinforced the politics of repression in the Philippines. The impact of the intensification of militarization on the lives of the peasant women, their husbands, their children, their work, their organization demands an immediate halt to U.S. military aid to the Philippines. The presence of the U.S. bases in the Philippines, which is part of this politics of repression, must be withdrawn.

The impact of IMF's "tied aid" (Payer 1974) on the poor peasant women and other sectors in Philippine society suggests that it reverse its development aid policies on the Philippines. It must accede to the demands of the organized popular resistance.

There must be an immediate end to the counter-insurgency strategy of the present government that causes

tremendous misery in the village communities where the backbone of the economy, food production, takes place. Counter-insurgency of Low-Intensity Conflict, which in its consequence becomes a total war strategy, is not the answer to the resistance of the above-ground organizations and of the revolutionary armed resistance. The problem is the system that creates such forms of resistance. Their resistance is a form of change. Their alternative change agenda must be heard and given legitimacy in the politics of the state, in its policy-making institutions, and in its apparatus of local and national governance. This is the way to hear the cry of the poor.

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VITA

Born in the Philippines, Ligaya Lindio McGovern is the fifth child of nine children of Teofilo Lindio and Monica Macasinag. She is married to James I. McGovern, with whom she has a son, Paul. She completed her Bachelor of Arts degree, "with distinction", at St. Scholastica's College, Manila, Philippines in 1969. In 1975, she was granted a three-year scholarship at the Asian Social Institute, Manila, Philippines, allowing her to complete a Master of Science in Sociology in 1979. She was a faculty member of St.Scholastica's College, Manila, Philippines from 1969-1975. She also taught in the sociology department of Assumption College, Manila, Philippines from 1977-1979.

She came to the United States in 1980, and began her doctoral studies in sociology at Loyola University Chicago in 1986 and completed it in December 1991. While completing her Ph.D., she taught undergraduate sociology courses and other courses crosslisted with the Women's Studies and the African-American Studies Program at Loyola. She was also a recipient of three research assistanships, a Teaching Fellowship Award of the Loyola Scholars Program, and of the Future Faculty Development Program of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in the U.S..

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Ligaya Lindio McGovern has been read and approved by the following committee:

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The final copies have been read by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

4/10/92
Date

Director's Signature

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

GENDER AND THE POLITICS OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND RESISTANCE IN THE PHILIPPINES

VOLUME I

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

BY

LIGAYA LINDIO MCGOVERN

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

May 1992

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VOLUME I

CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW

Introduction

The current research on women and development contains little information about Filipino women. Yet, the story of Filipino women suggests that gender is pertinent to the politics of underdevelopment and resistance. This gap in the literature limits understanding about women in Third World development, and about the ways First World and Third World politics and economic relations are structured. Studying women and gender relations in developing nations will help reassess current knowledge about women and development, and contribute to designing and implementing policies for greater equality in the global community.

I did fieldwork in the Philippines in Summer 1989 (May 21 to August 9) to fill these gaps in the literature. The objective of my fieldwork was to understand the everyday lives of organized Filipino peasant women and the politics of their resistance. My aim was to view this daily life within the national and international context of underdevelopment. I chose to study peasant women because the majority of Filipino women, approximately 67%, are peasants. The organization to which my informants belonged was AMIHAN, the National

Federation of Peasant Women in the Philippines. I focused my study on one local chapter of this national Federation, KAMMI (Kababaihang Magbubukid ng Mindoro). KAMMI is the provincial federation of peasant women's organizations in Occidental Mindoro, a province in the Southern Tagalog Region in Luzon, Philippines.

In this study, I examine the everyday village lives of Filipino peasant women of KAMMI as they are enmeshed into the broader structures that keep the Philippines underdeveloped. I present Filipino peasant women not as passive victims of the forces of underdevelopment, but as active creators of alternative social relations and ideologies of development. I analyze the dialectical dynamics of exploitation and resistance from the experience of peasant women. I postulate that while the power structures that benefit from the forces of underdevelopment attempt to repress political action towards radical change in Philippine society, repression creates contradictions that contribute to organized resistance. These contradictions by themselves do not move people to act. Instead, it is necessary that peasant women or any other group, develop strategies and tactics of organized resistance. In the Philippines, women's resistance, while persistent, is not without problems. Repression and militarization, which is at the command of the state, is a major obstacle to their struggle for social justice. These women embody the forces of gender and class inequality, and

experience contradictions of their nation's colonial legacy. As a consequence, Filipino peasant women's struggles for emancipation are very complex because they confront tensions arising from oppressive social structures as well as the broader movement for change in the Philippines.

Perspectives on Third World Women and the Politics of Underdevelopment

There are competing perspectives in the current literature on women in Third World development. In this section I provide an overview of these competing perspectives, the gaps in this literature, and how my research contributes to filling these gaps in the emerging literature.

The Integrationist View of Women in Third World Development

In the early 1970's the idea of "integrating women into development" became part of the debate in mainstream thinking in studies of development (Roodkowsky 1984). The idea was pioneered by Ester Boserup's book, "Woman's Role in Economic Development" (1970). A western concept, this idea was promoted by multilateral development/aid agencies.

The "integrationist view" (Anand 1984) held that women in the Third World would overcome poverty and inequality if they were integrated into the market wage economy. Such "integration" would insure income for women and would make possible their participation in the development process. Based on the modernization model of development which views

that developing nations can take off from poverty if they are integrated into the international market economy, the notion of "integrating women into development" looks upon women as an untapped resource, the use of which could achieve economic "growth" for the nation. "Growth" was to be measured in terms of increased exports and GNP, which was expected to trickle down to the poor (Youssef 1976; Anand 1984). This model assumed that Third World countries were poor because their population was growing faster than "growth" can trickle down, or because resources were inadequate and technology was not modern enough.

The concept of "integrating women into development" failed to recognize the actual productivity of Third World women and failed to question the nature of development into which women were to be integrated (Karl 1984a, 1984e). The view assumed that Third World women could improve their lot mainly through education and employment within the capitalist economy (Anand 1984).

The "integrationists" treated Third World women as passive and acquiescent regarding the course development was taking in their particular country (Roodskowsky 1984, 16). It portrayed women as unconcerned with the existing pressures and goals of their nation's development. Uncritically viewing development as economic growth within a capitalist framework, integrationists equated women's liberation with the accumulation of cash through waged labor and with mobility

within a hierarchical occupational structure (Roodkowsky 1984). Nor did they consider how this development model produced poverty in the Third World that Frank (1974, 1981) and Siegel (1979) documented, or how the politics of development and underdevelopment affected the life chances of Third World women.

Critique on the Integrationist Approach

Beneria and Sen (1986) criticize the integrationist perspective on women in development. Focusing on Boserup's book, "Women's Role in Economic Development" (1970), which is framed within the classical modernization paradigm, they criticized her view on modernization was an inevitable economic process into which women would be integrated.

Beneria and Sen emphasized, that "modernization (was) not a neutral process, but one that obey(ed) the dictates of capitalist accumulation and profit-making" (Beneria and Sen 1986, 150). In their view, modernization generates and intensifies inequalities, taking advantage of existing gender hierarchies to place women in subordinate positions. Capitalist accumulation has a powerful tendency to separate the direct producers from the means of production and to make their survival conditions more insecure and contigent.
In rural areas this may be manifested in new forms of class stratification between rich and capitalist landowners and poor, landless peasants. A focus on gender in development

shows how the sexual division of labor serves this powerful tendency as well as how capital accumulation may define a new division of labor in which women are assigned a particular place (Beneria and Sen 1986, 149).

Beneria and Sen suggested that an analysis of women's subordination must consider both women's roles as producer and as reproducers showing how the households are exploited in the process of capitalist accumulation and expansion (Beneria and Sen 1986, 152-154). They argue that analysis of women's subordination must include the interaction between women's productive and reproductive roles. This way we do not dichotomize these two spheres of women's lives. For example, under capitalist relations household work, mainly relegated to women, is unpaid or unsubsidized, although such work maintains and reproduces the labor force and the values needed to keep the system. Capital accumulation rests not only on the exploitation of women's productive work, but also the household and women's place in it.

In my view, what is missing in Beneria and Sen's analysis is a consideration of how the state in Third World nations propels and sustains capitalist accumulation. A pattern becoming more and more visible in Third World development is the synchronization of military policies along with the increased entry of international capital, both of which can have an impact on the women's roles as producers and reproducers. The effects of this process on women must be

examined in the politics of underdevelopment in the Third World.

A similar critique of the "integrationist perspective" on women in Third World development comes from Noeleen Heyzer (1986). She begins her book on women in development with the following statement:

> What is problematic is not the lack of integration of women into the development process, but the nature of women's integration, the concept of development itself, and the strategies put forth at different levels to bring about capital accumulation. All these have a specific impact on the position of women and on the relationship between men, women, and children.

Heyzer argues that the various forms and bases of women's subordination are linked to the larger structures that generate inequalities and class positions that develop from the interaction of economic and socio-cultural systems. To understand these forms and bases of women's subordination we must locate different groups of women in the concrete context of their daily lives. Heyzer's approach is more empirical. She documents how the integration of Southeast Asian economies into the peripheries of the world capitalist system has negatively affected poor women. For example, as agricultural production in these economies were geared towards export, women's poverty increased as production shifted from staple food to cash crops. It also displaced many peasant women from farm work as cash crop production began to mechanize. In exported-oriented plantation sector, like in Malaysia, poor women's reproductive role is exploited as their children are

used as unpaid or cheap labor.

While Heyzer gives a good overview on the general patterns of capitalist development and its negative impact on Southeast Asian women, she sacrifices an indepth treatment of the particularities of the politics of underdevelopment in each of the countries -- Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand. Despite this limitation, she recognizes the one neglected area of study on Southeast Asian women -- their strategies and organization for change (Heyzer 1986, 8). Thus, Heyzer ends her documentation with a chapter on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots women's movements in Southeast Asia. The emergence of these women's organizations indicates that Southeast Asian women are entering into the politics of development that affects them. An underlying principle shared by these organizations is the idea that significant long-term change in their individual and local community situation can come only through changes in the larger political-economic structure. For example, they work at changing structures discriminatory of women and serve as pressure groups for change in national policies that affect them. The approach of these organizations facilitate poor women to identify and discuss their problems, to learn how their problems are linked to the broader social systems, and turn this new understanding into political action. The politicization process of these organizations is directed primarily to developing women's awareness of the causes of

their problems, their capabilities in dealing with these problems, and how they can make society value their work. Heyzer considers political consciousness raising important, since she argues that people internalize social structures that may not rapidly change even if the actual social conditions that helped produce them have changed (Heyzer 1986,133) Politicization is an important process of these organizations but a difficult one, notwithstanding the repressive response of their government who are hostile to such critical consciousness.

Heyzer does a good job of concluding that the process of emancipation of Southeast Asian women from the forces that subordinate them require organization and new social structures. The strategies of their organization must go beyond helping women to simply adapting survival strategies in an existing system, but must direct them toward social transformation. On the other hand, however, Heyzer lacks an indepth empirical investigation into the politics of the organizations she mentions, the historical context of their subordination and emancipation, and the political context of their social formation.

The Emerging Literature Within the Marxist-Feminist and Marxist-Feminist-Dependency Framework

The emerging literature on women in Third World development that is a reaction to the integrationist perspective contain the Marxist-Feminist or the Marxist-

Feminist-Dependency theoretical underpinnings. Although as yet needing refinement, this theoretical underpinnings can provide a useful framework that can explain gender and the politics of underdevelopment in the Third World. This emerging literature has more radical policy and organizational implications than one can draw from the "integrationist perspective".

According to Leonora Angeles (1986), the Marxist-Feminist perspective evolved out of the realization that Marxism as an analytical tool has a potential in understanding how historical transformation affects the lives of men and women. However, classical Marxism does not have a feminist perspective, because it analyzed women in relation to the economic system, but not the gendered power relations between men and women. Marxist-Feminist analysis examines gender relations in ways that they are distinct and at the same time connected to capitalist relations of production. It locates the relationship between the place of women in the power hierarchy before and after the capitalist transformation of the mode of production, but which a socialist revolution will not automatically abolish. For example, Croll (1986) concluded from her study of the socialist development in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and Tanzania that women in these societies "repeatedly assert that socialist development programs will not of their own accord bring about changes in gender relations, and it seems apparent that in the absence

of a well-defined policy, female labor has intensified, which to a certain extent has subsidized economic development" (p.252). Croll analyzed that while the planned economic strategies in these societies encouraged women to contribute to economic development through involvement in productive work, they paid little attention to decreasing women's household responsibilities and the sexual division of labor in the household. Policy-makers considered such goal costly to the economy.

Some Marxists-Feminists integrate the dependency perspective analyzing Third World women's lives, taking account of how the peripheral position of Third World countries affects the position of women. They believe that women's place in the political economies of Third World countries is a consequence of their countries' dependent position in the world capitalist system. For example, modernization of agriculture has not really benefited majority of poor women and men (Anand 1984; Karl 1984b, 1984c, 1984d). The close link of developing countries to the capitalist world market has harmed women as food production for subsistence has been displaced by food production for export. Self-suffiency that resulted from subsistence farming was transplanted with foreign aid and resulted in rising Third World hunger.

Anand (1984) points out the need for a new theory of development which incorporates feminism to enable the poor and the powerless to develop strategies that will address the

roots of underdevelopment and the institutionalized exploitation of women. The role women must play in the transformation process is not to integrate themselves into the exploitative capitalist relations, but to organize and mobilize women on all levels -- local, national, and international, as a first step toward radical changes in power relations. Patriarchial structures and attitudes must be systematically dealt with at the same time that national structures are being transformed. It is organized women who will play a significant role in achieving these ends.

The integration of women into wage work within the context of international division of labor and capital accumulation associated with the growth of transnational corporations has not liberated them (Karl 1984a; Enloe 1980, 1983b; Fuentes and Ehrenreich 1983, 1984; Safa 1986; Grossman 1979; Nash 1983; Perpinan 1986). Wage employment of women in multinational corporations as a way to integrate them into the wage economy has not significantly brought economic liberation for women. Although it might be true that at least these women are not jobless, they are exploited by these enterprises as source of cheap, rigidly controlled labor. These corporations also stifle the women's potential for being an organized labour power by restricting their organizations. Patriarchy alone without military reinforcement is inadequate to sustain the control mechanisms needed in order to reassure foreign investors a profitable climate for investment (Ong

1979; Enloe 1983,1985; Lim 1983). The state protects the interests of these transnational corporations through military repression and legislation of policies that control men and women's organizations.

Some scholars have examined Third World women as reproducers and producers. Elholm, Harris, and Young (1981) distinguish biological reproduction from social reproduction which includes the daily and the generational reproduction of the labor force. While biological reproduction refers to the physical development of human beings, the reproduction of the labor force refers to the reproduction of the processes whereby people become workers and continue to be workers. The rationale behind this analytical distinction is to identify those non-biological processes that subordinate women, since if we can identify them, then gender inequality and women's oppression is not inevitable but can be changed.

Beneria (1979) proposes the thesis that women's subordination in different societies is rooted in their special role in the reproduction of the labor force. She says that most societies have assigned to women two other aspects of the reproduction of the labor force -- child care and the domestic activities associated with the daily maintenance of the labor force. Beneria stresses that it is important to analyze women's role in reproduction in order to understand the extent and nature of their participation in production and of the nature of the sexual division of labor.

In most rural economies, domestic work and non-domestic work are highly integrated. Participation of women in agricultural marketing work is often considered an extension of their domestic work.

In my view, a consideration of the reproductive role of women is an important theoretical development in studying women in Third World development. It helps us see how their private spaces can become locations of resistance. As well, it allows us to examine the link between household work and non-household work in the proletarianization of the peasantry and how women's household work and its concomitant ideological construction are exploited in maintaining the articulation of the different modes of production and production for the world market. This is well-illustrated by Maria Meis (1982) who did a case study of the lacemakers of Narsipur. Meis found that the whole industry of lace-making in Narsipur is sustained by the women's productive work within the confines of their homes. This confinement allowed trading of the women's product to be in the control of men. Thus, there emerged a new class of male traders who got enriched from their export of lace the women produce. But the women remain poor while the industry prospers from their invisible work.

Other studies show how Third World women combine productive and reproductive roles through their involvement in the informal sector (Mason 1985; Bolles 1986). The unemployed are not supported by state welfare institutions,

hence the development of an informal sector. The informal sector fill consumers' need for low-cost goods and services, thus lowering the cost of reproducing the labor force (Babb 1986). Thus, women's work in the informal sector, which is often regarded as part of their domestic work, actually links women into the public sector of the economy (Bolles 1986, 74).

Most Marxist-Feminists do not explicitly take into account how the existence of different modes of production that characterize Third World political economies affect class and gender relations. Patricia Stamp (1986) argues that on one hand, European experience indicates that the emergence of capitalism transformed the pre-capitalist mode of production (feudalism) and brought about the formation of a capitalist class structure comprising of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the experience of colonized societies, as most Third World nations are, show that the capitalist penetration of their political economies did not completely transform pre-capitalist mode of production. Pre-capitalist elements persists in a distorted form as capitalism interlocks itself into pre-existing relations of production. In this situation, the primary contradiction, Stamp says, is between capital and the peasantry. The exploitation of landless peasants, in which case surplus is expropriated from them, subsidizes underdeveloped capital. Third World economic relations can be adequately understood only with some conceptions of how the social relations of gender are involved

in this articulation of different modes of production. Stamp's case study of the Kikuyu ethnic group in Africa showed that patriarchy is not a universal concept in all times. The pre-colonial Kikuyu community had a communal mode of production that was basically classless, in a sense that no group was free to appropriate or accumulate surplus produced by another group. Kikuyu women as elders had a collective authority in various decisions, including disposition over lineage resources. However, colonialism with its imported sex-gender system distorted this pre-colonial mode of production -- men gained the power to appropriate the surplus from the women's petty commodity production. Under the colonial policy of land consolidation, which began in 1950's and continued into the early 1960's, women lost their ownership of the means of production, land and its produce. The colonial government legally transferred landownership from lineage ownership system, which allocated for women the right to own land, to individual male heads of household. Along with this, men also then gained control over the produce of the land. Women were relegated to subsistence production. Although the women continue to have control over subsistence production, their non-wage labor actually subsidizes the reproduction of labor power and capitalist cash crop production. It is this form of subsidy to capital that partly feeds the dynamics of capital accumulation. This analysis shows why gender is an important concept for analyzing the

articulation of diffrent modes of production in Third World political economies.

Johnson (1986) also emphasized that gender analysis in the context of Third World women's experience must be integrated with historical analysis of the colonial relationships that left a legacy to their present situation. In her examination of the colonial experience of Yoruba women of Southern Western Nigeria, Johnson found out that colonial patriarchy not only exacerbated gender inequality between men and women, but that it also generated class and gender divisions among women. Colonialism did not only develop a male elite but also a female elite class who benefited more from the colonized political economy while majority of the women as well as men were impoverished.

Development as Empowerment

While the Marxist-Feminist-Dependency framework conceptualizes women in Third World development more in economic perspective, another emerging body of literature on women in Third World development views women as empowered through development. Audrey Bronstein (1982), views development for women in terms of empowerment in the political sense. She says that development for women must be defined in terms of women's

> increasing ability to assume influence and control over all aspects of her environment -- physical, economic, social, and political.....Peasant women are not in charge of their own lives. Unless they are empowered to examine

> and challenge where authority and power lie at home, in the village, and in their countries, there will be little real growth and change. Development must involve a reallocation of power (Bronstein 1982, 268).

Bronstein sees conscientization as the first and essential step in this process of empowerment. Conscientization involves the process of identifying the human-made forces and mechanisms of the women's oppression and discovering that within themselves exists the ability to learn and the power to effect change (Bronstein 1982, 266-267). It is a process of politicization that is central to the liberation of Third World women, whose triple oppression at work, in the family, and in the community is contextualized in the history of exploitation that has created continuing oppressive economic and political structures (Bronstein 1982, 22). It is thus, in Bronstein that we see a different conceptualization of Third World working class women, particularly the peasant women. While the integrationist perspective and the Marxist-Feminist-Dependency perspective still basically depict Third Women as victims of the nature of Third World development, in Bronstein, Third World women are not just being acted upon by historical forces of underdevelopment. They are, in fact, working out their empowerment amidst the risks of repression and they possess an emerging consciousness that I think must be considered in refining our concepts and theories on gender and the politics of underdevelopment. The lives of the peasant women of Bolivia, Peru, El Salvador and Guatemala, that Bronstein

studied, are enmeshed in the national and international structures of dependency and underdevelopment, but they are also resistant to this process. Studies similar to Bronstein's are sparse in the emerging literature of women in development. Much needed are studies on Third World women's collective strategies for change and on the difficulties and successes they experience in this change process. My study on Filipino peasant women is an attempt to fill this gap and to add a systematic dimension in this emerging literature on women in development. It takes a critical perspective on the integrationist perspective on women in development and attempts at contributing to the conceptualization of development as empowerment beginning from the experience of Third World women.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Fieldwork in a Militarized Zone

KAMMI operates within a political context wherein the state represses the underground and above-ground resistance movements in the Philippines. Even with the ascendancy of Aquino in 1986, militarization continues to be part of the politics of ruling in the Philippines. Militarization has not only caused difficulties and problems on the lives of Filipino men, women, and children, especially in the villages where militarization is most intense, but it has also posed difficulties to researchers. For example, people I met in the Philippines who do research on human rights said that they could not get into villages where militarization is most intense. This affects the continuity of their documentation. While in the Philippines I have also read in one of the local papers that a female researcher for the Association of Concerned Teachers was missing while doing research in the village. Doing fieldwork in a political context such as this one raises methodological issues, upon which I would like to focus in this chapter.

The problems of research in a militarized setting have

received little attention. Yet, discussion about this experience would be useful, as military repression is a fact of life in many Third World countries and where the production of knowledge about women's lives in these countries becomes more urgent (Enloe 1983b, 1985; Bunster-Burotto 1986).

My purpose in this chapter is to make sociological sense of my fieldwork difficulties and experiences. Basically, I would like to talk about the problems I encountered in the field, how I dealt with them, and the factors that contributed to the success of my fieldwork despite these difficulties. I conclude this chapter by attempting to derive the methodological implications of these experiences for feminist research and in studying Third World women.

National Militarization and Fieldwork

Change in the Original Research Plan

Militarization in the Philippines intruded into my fieldwork from the beginning, by making it difficult for me to stick to my original plans. Originally I planned to do my research in the Bicol Region where one of the local chapters of AMIHAN, the peasant women's organization I wanted to study, is located. I chose this region because it is one where there is intense organized political activity and because I could speak its dialect. Several months before I left for the field, I made arrangements with the International Representative of GABRIELA (the national coalition of non-

governmental women's organization in the Philippines), who was in the U.S. at that time. With her recommendation, I was able to get easy access to conduct my research on AMIHAN, which is federated with GABRIELA. When I arrived in the Philippines in May 21, 1989, I immediately communicated with the women who the GABRIELA International Representative suggested I should contact. I arranged a meeting with them, and through them I was able to meet with the coordinator of AMIHAN. I found out that the mass leaders of the Bicol AMIHAN chapter were harassed by the military and they could not secure my stay in the area. So within a very short period we had to line up alternatives. The coordinator of AMIHAN suggested 3 local chapters located in 3 different places. One was a chapter in Quezon which was close to the Bicol region, another was a chapter in Isabela which was closer to the urban area of Manila, and the third was a chapter in Mindoro, an isolated island along the southwestern part of Luzon region. Quezon was scrapped out because the region was also being subjected to intensified militarization at the time of fieldwork, and the peasant woman leader of the local chapter there was busy seeking immediate help for her husband who was arrested by the military and whose life was threatened by being "salvaged" (a colloquial term for extra-judicial execution) if they could not secure immediate legal counsel within the time limit set by the military. Isabela and Mindoro were the only two choices left. The coordinator of AMIHAN national office

strongly suggested Isabela, since it was one of the most organized chapters and would be much easier to reach. But I objected because I could not speak the local dialect there and had a previous experience in 1979 doing fieldwork in another Philippine region where I could not understand the dialect. Although she assured me of providing me with a translator, I was certain this would interefere in my recording of fieldnotes. So, Mindoro was left as the only alternative. The national coordinator of AMIHAN offered Mindoro as an alternative for the following reasons: a) that it would be safer for me to do my fieldwork there since there was a legal institution to receive and sponsor me, b) that the place was not as intensely militarized as Quezon and Bicol, c) that the local chapter had been in regular communication with AMIHAN national office. I finally chose Mindoro on the basis that this was a place I had not yet been before, that I could understand and speak the local dialect of the people, and that with the AMIHAN's assurance of my safety, I felt secure. Thus, I changed my original plan.

Militarization in Mindoro and Fieldwork

Realizing Risks and Figuring Out Safe Entry

When in Mindoro, I realized that militarization was also taking place there, more intense than I expected. I realized that I could not be shielded from it just as the peasant women and their organization (KAMMI), whom I wanted to study, were

not. I got a sense of this during my first day in Mindoro, when KAMMI was having a 3-day leadership training. What frequently kept coming up in the sharing of the peasant women's experiences was their experience of military harassment and how militarization makes their organizing difficult. Ate Lalay for example told me that the military threatened to "salvage" her (colloquial term for military killing), but she stood up ("nanindigan ako") against them by arguing that she is not afraid of them because she is not doing anything wrong.

I realized that I could not be shielded from the risks of doing fieldwork in a militarized village, when I asked Ate Lalay and Ate Loya how I could stay in their village to know about their problems and what they are doing to deal with them. It took them a long time to figure out the best way I could get into their village with little risks from the military both for them and for me. They talked about which villages I should not go to because military operations take place there more often and what villages were quite remote and military encounters could likely take place. Having no knowledge of the place myself, I had to rely on the wisdom of the peasant women's advice. It also took a long time for Ate Lalay and Ate Loya to figure out the best way I could stay in their village without being suspected by the military. They were wary of the fact that being a new face in the area, I would be suspected by the military and this could have

reprisals on them as well as my safety in the area. At first they thought that I should just disguise myself as their relative, but they thought it could cause some suspicion also. So, finally, they said that I should establish a legal status by going to the mayor's office of their municipality and get a permit to enter their village to do research. This way, I would be safer, since I would be known to the mayor and he could at least give me protection. Since Ate Lalay and Ate Lola preferred that I should not enter their village before getting the mayor's permit, I could not go with them when they went back to their village after their leadership training in San Jose, the urban capital of Mindoro. Instead, my contact in Mindoro accompanied me to the mayor's office to get the permit. To get to this municipality from San Jose, we had to cross a river while on a public jeepney. I was quite afraid that the jeepney's motor might stop in the middle of the river, but the driver skillfully pulled through the waters which at that time was not as deep than if it rained the night before. We were not able to see the mayor on our first trip because he was out of town, so we had to go back at another time.

Direct Encounter with the Military and Ethical Issues

The second time we went back to see the mayor for acquiring permit to enter the village of Ate Lalay and Ate Loya, I was placed in a situation where we had to deal directly with the military and I was unprepared for it. This

was a situation we tried to avoid as much as possible, but here it was! While walking on the unpaved road leading to the municipal building where the mayor's office is located, a soldier (standing by the military headquarter adjacent to the municipal building) called our attention and said, "Miss puede ba tingnan kung ano ang laman ng bag mo?" (Miss, can we see what is inside your bag?). Immediately I got so nervous. Since I was afraid that they might do us harm given the fact they were holding guns, and that our resistance might trigger more trouble, we walked obediently towards the military headquarter where the soldiers were standing. The soldier, who called us, identified himself as Sergeant Agustin. Then he searched my bag because he suspected that I was an "Amazona", a name attributed to a female guerilla member of the New People's Army. He did not present any search warrant to search my things and interrogate me because of his suspicion. He found tapes in my bag and wanted to listen to them, but he found out they were empty. I got more nervous when he found my camera and said that he would like to take pictures of us. He looked at me through the camera, but he didn't click it and I felt a little bit relieved. He said may be I had a "45" in my bag; I asked him what "45" means and that seemed to have indicated to him of my ignorance about guns. He asked me why I was so nervous; I answered that it was because this was my first experience of being accosted by soldiers this way and because they were holding guns and I am

not used to seeing guns. He subjected me to tactical interrogation (which I found unfairly nerve-wrecking), by asking me similar questions over and over like -- why we were going to see the mayor, how I came to Mindoro, if I knew someone in Mindoro before I came there, who accompanied me to Mindoro, what office or organization in Manila I was connected with, what I was teaching the people, to whom was I giving medicine (since I had medicines in my bag), why I came to Mindoro when the political situation there is dangerous, and how I got to know my companion. After he learned that I was consistent in identifying myself as a Ph.D. student of Loyola University of Chicago who came to Mindoro to do research as an academic requirement to get my doctorate degree, he explained that his action was part of his "tungkulin" (responsibility) to safeguard the national security of the country. (His way of safeguarding the national security, unfortunately, did not make me feel secure). With this explanation, he left me to another soldier (who did not identify himself) to do the same interrogation. He asked me similar questions and also searched my bag. He found my diary which I did not want him to see, so I told him that it contained personal notes to my husband whom I left behind in the United States. Then, he asked me to show him an evidence to prove that I was really authorized by Loyola University to do this research. This time, I took out the letter I brought with me signed by the chair of the Sociology department of the

University in which was stated my purpose for being in the Philippines. He read it and let another soldier looked at it. Then he said that I should go to the Provincial Military Commander to get permit to do research before I should go to the Mayor, and the Provincial Commander would probably decide that I go to the office in Manila. We said that we would do his suggestion, but we would still like to see the mayor because that was what we came for. After a while, he agreed and walked us to the office of the Mayor.

I was able to get the permit from the Mayor to conduct my research in the area without difficulty. But the Mayor could not assure me of my security in the village because he had no influence over the conduct of military operations. He said the best I could do was to avoid any possible encounter with the military or paramilitary while in the village. I told him what the soldiers at the headquarters across his office did to us and their suggestion that we ask permit from the Provincial Commander. He indicated this was not necessary.

This experience with the military, early in my stay in Mindoro, dogged my research. First, it made me nervous and angry, and it also made me realize that I had to make precautions to safeguard my data. The ethical concern of protecting my research, from those who can use it to further their politics of repression or to harm my subjects, came foremost in my mind. So, although I planned to do so, I did

not use a tape recorder in the women's villages. This had both an advantage and a disadvantage. One advantage was that I had written data (approximately 25 pounds of paper) when I came back from the fieldwork; the disadvantage was that I had no other record to check details I might have missed in writing down observations and interviews. Given the limited funds I had, I also wasted my money buying those tapes and micro-recorder only to find out it was inappropriate to use them.

Because of the danger, the other precaution I did to safeguard my data was to use codes to write down my observations, record my interviews, and other fieldnotes that I thought were most sensitive issues. This was time-consuming since I had to figure out codes that I would be able to understand when I get back to them after I leave the field. I would keep all these notes in such a way that they could not be easily found.

Another precaution I did, was to leave the village community sometimes in order to write. I used the place of my contact in Mindoro as a headquarter for some of my writing, which I could not do in the village. It was also the safest place for storage of data since it was located in the urban area. It also provided me a place for quiet reflection, which I did usually early in the morning and late at night when everyone was already asleep.

Thus, taking precautions to protect my data was a

critical ethical issue throughout my fieldwork, to protect it from getting into the hands of people who could use it against the peasant women. This possibility became more probable to me when I learned, while in Mindoro, that the national office of KMP (Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas - the national coalition of peasant organizations in the Philippines) in Manila (the largest metropolitan city in the Philippines) was raided by the military to search for someone they wanted to arrest. They did not find him, but they were able to get the list of KMP members in Mindoro.

Overcoming Fear and Taking the Risks

The possibility of military intervention in my research made me afraid. The thought that the mayor could not assure me of my security even with his legal permit made me feel uncomfortable. Also a health worker, who works in the community of Ate Lalay and Ate Loya, told me that the military is usually suspicious about researchers living in the village, and that they conduct zoning wherein they identify people who are not from the village and they take them for interrogation. Because of these risks, I considered whether to stay in the village to do fieldwork, or simply just ask the peasant women to come to the urban area of San Jose and interview them there. I carefully reflected about these options, in fact, my religious training surfaced and I prayed. In my prayer, the thought came into my mind that as a sociologist researching in a context of injustice, I cannot totally stand

apart from the conflict injustice breeds. I sought courage in my God, who calls people to respond to the demands of justice. After an honest self-confrontation, I became aware that my own fears were interferring in my own decisions. I realized that I was allowing myself to be intimidated, and that I cannot study peasant women's resistance without myself being part of that resistance. I thought that overcoming my fears and taking risks myself, like the peasant women, was one of the ways of my being part of this resistance. Then, I thought that the option to pull the peasant women out of their village and interview them in an office in an urban area, was actually on my part, an option for the comfort of "arm-chair sociology". I also saw that simply interviewing women outside their villages would be inconsistent with my research problem, which entailed seeing women's everyday lives in the village where they live and work. With all these rumbling thoughts and awareness of my own contradictions, I chose to change myself (overcome my fears) rather than change my method. In doing so, I heard and saw things about the peasant women that I would not have seen or heard if I simply stayed in the city. And I would like to repeat the experience and do another fieldwork. I found the peasant women as beautiful people, and I would like to be with them again. While I admired their courage, I also cried at the sufferings militarization has brought them and their families. I felt humanized just by being with them and learning about their earnest attempt in

creating a culture of resistance than submission. And this made me look into myself. It was here where I got a taste of what I would like to pursue further in my sociological career -- to explore research method that make us look into ourselves as we look at the lives of other women who stand at the intersection of gender and class, or of gender/race/and class.

Culture, Militarization and Fieldwork

Beyond the repressive situation, the Filipino culture, where relationships are more personal than impersonal, also changed the way I gathered and recorded data. Doing fieldwork in an eastern culture, such as the Philippines, is different from doing fieldwork in a western culture. While in the U.S. formality was appreciated or at least expected, in the Philippines, people were not very comfortable when I was too formal in my conversation with them. The village peasant women perceived me as too formal when I carried a piece of paper, had an interview schedule before me, and would write down their responses. I saw that these activities somehow interfered with the spontaneity of the occasion and with my ability to establish rapport with my respondents. The peasant women were more open when I simply talked to them informally in a conversational way, without writing down what they were saying. This way I could be more personal in my approach, and the women were more trusting and open, and I could gather more information from them. I shared this observation with some professionals who also do research in Mindoro, and they

confirmed my observation since they have experienced the same. They pointed out that this was not simply an odd cultural trait, but comes about because the women are wary of having their words recorded, since they have had experience of military searches for "subversive" materials. One of the women buried a book on organizing, which I did not think was subversive, during the military operations in her village in 1987.

Factors Contributing to the Success of the Fieldwork

Despite these difficulties, my fieldwork was successful. First, I was able to go into the village. Second, I came back with data. And third, I came out alive.

What were the factors that contributed to this success?

Cultural Reciprocity

The first factor is what I call cultural reciprocity. By this I refer to the natural desire of the peasant women to approach people in a very personal way and my ability to correspond in the same way. They liked me to be with them. In fact, they were happy that I was going to stay with them, in many cases inviting me to be with them. The first time they met me, they addressed me at once as "Ate", an address they give to someone who is their kin or relative. This is their way of expressing their acceptance of someone outside their kin. I corresponded by also addressing the women "Ate" and the men "Kuya". The younger men addressed me "Ate", the

older men called me by my first name. I got so used and comfortable in this personalistic culture, (being a Filipino myself, born and having grown up in the Philippines), that when I came back to the U.S. I found some discomfort in our more formal ways.

Establishing Trust

The second factor in my success, was the way I was able to get the trust of the peasant women and those who facilitated my research. It was not difficult to get their trust because I went through the proper channels and respected their standard operating procedures, and that I did not go straight to the village, the way one would ordinarily do in the U.S. -- this could have been a disaster if I did. I described what I did to respect this procedure earlier in this section -- such as going through the International Representative of GABRIELA and the National Office of AMIHAN while already in the Philippines.

My political involvement also contributed to getting the trust who facilitated my research -- they knew through the recommendation of the International Representative of GABRIELA that given my political alliances, I was not an informer and I would refuse to be. While there are those who would argue that sociologists should not be politically involved because their involvement will ideologically contaminate the sacred canons of a value-free sociology, in my experience my political involvement was a plus than a negative factor in my

fieldwork, especially in a militarized area where there are contending political forces.

The peasant women also trusted me because they saw that I was genuinely interested in knowing their problems and what they are doing to deal with them. What I wanted to study was an issue that was also relevant to them. When I told them that I wanted to learn about their problems as peasant women, I did not see hesitation on their part to offer me information because they themselves would like to do something about these problems.

Open Methodology vs. Rigid Hypothesis Testing

I did not go to the Philippines to test a pre-defined hypothesis. If I did, perhaps I would be looking for something which was not there. I approached my fieldwork with a more open mind. I chose to learn about the everyday experiences of peasant women. My hope was to be able to place this experience within national and global contexts, to understand how the local worlds of peasant women contribute to or undermine Filipino national power structures. I hope to do what Dorothy Smith has named an "institutional ethnography", a process of inquiry that allows us to begin from what is problematic of women's everyday lives, attempting to find the causes and resolutions of these issues within the larger structures in which women's lives are enmeshed. This approach is important since often times the Third World has

been studied beginning from perspectives evolved from western experience, making the Third World simply as a testing ground of such perspectives. I see the need to evolve methodologies that allow us to begin from the experience of Third World women and conceptualize from there.

Personal Values and Commitment

Contrary to the positivist argument that we must leave our values behind in doing research, what influenced me to overcome the difficulties I encountered in my fieldwork is partly the personal value I have for social justice. I did not leave this value behind. In fact, I chose to study peasant women because they are among the poorest sector in Philippine society. Having a working class origin myself, I want to contribute, through research, in furthering the human liberation of working class women, men, and children in the Philippines and my other sisters in other Third World nations. I want to develop a scholarship that will allow me to do this. I don't think I am alone in this quest. For example, Patti Lather, in her "Feminist Perspectives on Empowering Research Methodologies" (1988, 578), says:

> Yet if critical inquirers are to develop a "praxis of the present," we must practice in our empirical endeavors what we preach in our theoretical formulations. Research which encourages self and social understanding and change-enhancing action on the part of "developing progressive groups" (Gramsci, 1971) requires research designs that allow us as researchers to reflect on how our value commitments insert themselves into our empirical work.

Organic Feminist Inquiry

During my fieldwork I tried to be open to what was emerging. I talked to people, looked and listened to find out how the world of peasant women are put together and how they are resisting. I learned early in my fieldwork what the women talk about more frequently. They often talked about the militarization of their community (something I thought they would be hesitant to talk about), their "paghihirap" (poverty), "tagkiriwi" (season of the year when they are most poor, their exploitation ("we are just working to let the rich eat"), and how militarization affected their lives, work, organization, family, children, and community. I made these issues, that the women tend to talk about frequently, the central point of my inquiry. Why are the peasant women poor? In what ways are they exploited? What are their experiences of militarization? What are the impact of these in their lives and their organization? What policies are there that affect their lives? What forms of resistance have they attempted and what had been the result of these? These questions became clearer to me only when I came in contact face to face with the women, and allowed them to talk about what they liked to talk about.

Most of the time information would come out in informal conversations during meals with them, walking together, swimming in the beach with some of them, or simply when I was just hanging around. There is a practice that I have

observed among the village people to have a "kwentohan sa gabi" (evening conversations usually after supper which can go as late as they could possibly do). I took these occasions to be with the women and other neighbors or relatives who came around to talk. There were times I succeeded in staying up as late, there were occasions when my body just gave in to my sleepiness. For example, on the last day I saw Ate Ara, we stayed up the whole night without sleep just talking. I put myself awake by drinking a lot of coffee, but for Ate Ara this seemed to be like a normal evening. Hence, part of being open to what was emerging was for me to have a feel of the rhythm of village life and adapt my ways to it. There were times, in fact when I shared bed with some of the peasant women I visited or with whom I stayed over night. These times became good occasions for the "kwentohan sa gabi" and became very trusting moments because the women could pour out their stories in a very open manner. These were occasions I found very personal and meaningful. Unlike a Westerner who may not be used to sleeping with little privacy, it was not foreign for me to be sleeping on a mat on the floor with two or three other women just next to me. Having grown up also in a poor family in the Philippines, I learned to sleep this way since our house was just small. Thus, my capacity to adjust to the poor conditions in the village life was partly coming from my peasant class background. I did not grow up in a middle-class household that a few of the Filipinos in the Philippines

have achieved. My class origin, therefore, was interacting with my methodology and in the way I conducted myself during the fieldwork. I did not have a condescending attitude in interacting with the peasant women because I also come from their class, which otherwise could have interferred in establishing rapport with them. It was not difficult for me to enter into their world of meanings because I also have a peasantry origin.

Other than associating with the women in informal ways, I also participated with them in their meetings and activities and asked them questions about these. I also conducted group interviews in situations where this could be the most appropriate way to get information from the women. Occasions I found most appropriate for group interviews were when the women came to one of their meetings or training sessions, when they were conversing in groups and I would join them, or when I sensed they could talk to me most naturally when other women were around. In some occasions I conducted semi-formal interviews where this was possible, but which I generally followed with informal conversations with the women since it was through this that they felt more comfortable talking. By semi-formal interviews I refer to some of the interviews I did wherein I could sit down with a peasant woman primarily for the purpose of asking her some questions and I would write down her responses when I saw that this was not threatening to her. I conversed with members of the women's village

communities, noting the broader situation in the community. Two non-members of KAMMI, who were formerly part of a peasant organization before the military harassment in 1987 also talked with me.

Sometimes, to observe the real situation of the peasant women, I would not give money for food. For example, Ate Gansa one afternoon while we were sitting around talking said, "We do not have 'merienda' (snacks)". I was tempted to offer money so we could have food because I was already getting hungry. I had 300 pesos in my pocket that time, but I did not give money. So, I also had to get hungry. While my stomach was churning, Ate Gansa said, "You know, Gaya, for us here peasants, since we do heavy work, it is hard for us not to have merienda". But we did not have merienda that afternoon. So I knew that the peasant women and their children, although are food producers, are sometimes hungry.

Although KAMMI did not have many documents, I tried to get them whatever was available. I was not able to do any library research while in Mindoro because I did not have time to do this since I paid more attention to getting field information and writing them down. Writing down fieldnotes was something I considered very important given the limited time I had. Although six weeks in Mindoro was short to know adequately KAMMI and its social context and staying longer would have certainly allow me to gather more information, I came out of Mindoro with data because I gave time to writing

fieldnotes. The awareness that I had a limited time also pushed me to work as hard as I could. I usually went to bed late and woke up early to record observations and information I gathered from talking to people. This gave me an insight into the importance of recording information and observations during fieldwork.

After being able to talk to at least 30 peasant women who are members of KAMMI, I began to hear the stories about their lives as peasant women. At this point I decided to interview some people in certain institutions that the peasant women were critical about or talked about in their conversations. Access to these institutions or organizations within a limited time, connections with people who could pre-arranged for me played a very important role. For example, I interviewed some people in the National Food Authority (Mindoro branch), a government institution that procures and markets rice with the idea that this would stabilize the price of rice. One of my contacts in Mindoro has a relative who knew the director there and provided me with an introduction. The same person also helped me interview a rice trader of one of the biggest rice trading companies in Mindoro, the Valiant.

Although it was not in my original research plan to interview professionals doing support work for peasants in Mindoro (from now on to be referred here as SP or support professionals) I talked to them when the peasant women raised issues about their organizational relationship with them. To

gather information on the national politics of AMIHAN, to which KAMMI is federated, I interviewed its 3 national peasant leaders in the national office of AMIHAN in Manila. The interview lasted for four to five hours each. I got a sense that this was quite long, since later I heard that one of them commented like, "Piniga talaga ako" (A Pilipino expression figuratively means I really induced as much information from them). I also had a chance to observe one of their planning meetings for one of their bi-annual National Council meeting. I had the opportunity to participate in AMIHAN's National Council Meeting during the last week of July in Manila (wherein KAMMI sent a provincial respresentative, Ate Ara, and we went together from Mindoro). I talked to and informally interviewed some of the peasant women who came to this meeting representing other provincial chapters of AMIHAN. I joined the peasant women in public demonstrations in Manila they participated in along with other mass organizations from other regions of the country. I kept copies of fliers that were being distributed in these demonstrations, and took some pictures of the demonstrations. I was able to tape record some of the speeches that were given during these demonstrations because they were held in the urbanized area of Manila, but it did not come out very clear. I also gathered whatever documents that AMIHAN made available. Other than talking to the peasant women, I also took every opportunity to talk to other people whom I came in contact at the national

office of AMIHAN.

Since the national peasant leaders of AMIHAN mentioned KMP (the national federation of peasant organizations in the Philippines) during my interviews with them, I also visited their national office in Manila. I was able to talk to two of the KMP national peasant leaders, acquired some of their documents, and participated in some of their activities in which AMIHAN sent representative/s -- like their press conference, and mass demonstrations they took leadership in organizing and mobilizing. After I came back to the United States, KMP national office continued sending me their newsletter.

I also thought that it would be good to gather some first hand information of GABRIELA (the National Federation of Peasant Women in the Philippines) into which AMIHAN is also federated. I thought that it might be useful to interview some key people there, since from my interviews with the AMIHAN national peasant leaders I got an indication that AMIHAN on the national level at least has some relationship with GABRIELA. This is also indicated in my preliminary review of GABRIELA's documents. I was able to interview two national leaders of GABRIELA.

I also gathered public documents, like a copy of the Aquino government's Comprehensive Agrarian Refrom Program (CARP), since during demonstrations the peasants and other sectors were very critical about it. I thought that I should

see the original document and analyze it myself, and see if the issues that the peasants were raising against it had some basis. I also listened to news broadcasts to have a feel of what was going in the country and got a sense of the ideologies presented in the media, such as the T.V. and the newspapers. I took down notes as I listened and collected newspaper clippings.

Other informants I had included those outside the village community who were part of the broader movement for change in the Philippines, and ordinary people whom I happened to engage in conversation about the political situation.

I observed three types of situations: the activities of KAMMI, the village life of some of the women of KAMMI, and the socio-political context of Mindoro and the Philippines.

When my time was up for coming back to the U.S., I used my last few days (first week of August 1989) in Manila to gather and buy secondary materials that I thought might be useful later in my work. I was able to buy some materials from the Women's Resource Center, Third World Studies Center of the University of the Philippines, Philippine Peasant Institute, Asian Studies Center of the Asian Social Institute, and the Women's Institute of St. Scholastica's College. Going to these places was not easy. Traffic in Manila was extremely tight and the streets get flooded when it rains. There were times when I had to walk in the floods under strong rain, while being very careful about invisible manholes, because

there were no public transportation that could go through the streets. In taking public transportation, one has to be very quick in jumping into the jeepney or to the bus since many people are waiting. Since transportation fees has gone up so high, especially taxi rates, I never took the taxi to get around. Operating under limited funds during my fieldwork, in a sense forced me to make sacrifices that put me in solidarity with the hardships that the peasant women I am studying encounter in their everyday lives. It gave me meaning in what I was doing and further motivated me to continue what I was doing. I thought that to study Third World underdevelopment, I must also be ready to take the discomforts and hardships the politics of this underdevelopment brings into the lives of my brothers and sisters in the Third World. Having gone through the difficulties in this fieldwork, I feel I can do more fieldwork in the Third World.

As I attempted to make a sociological sense of what I learned, I named my method "organic feminist inquiry". While Dorothy Smith calls her way of studying the women, whose everyday lives she tried to examine in relation to the power structures surrounding them, an "institutional ethnography", I call mine <u>organic feminist inquiry</u>. In Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, "organic" is defined as: "of relating to, arising from; fundamental, forming an integral element of a whole; having systematic coordination of parts; organized as a whole". My sociological conception of what I call

organic feminist inquiry is not exactly how Webster defines it, but the word "organic" came to my mind partly because of its essential meaning. It does not entirely deviate from a pilot study on participatory research I did in the Philippines. In 1978-1979 I did a pilot study, An Exploratory Study Towards the Development of a Possible Method for Folk Research (Lindio 1979), with a small slum community in Manila. My study explored ways to make research participatory. The idea behind "folk research" was that poor people with low education can analyze their own situation, but a sociologist trained in social research and social analysis can throw back this analysis but going beyond what the people may not immediately see. The problems that I chose to investigate with the people were the problems that they themselves experienced and wanted to talk and do something about. Most of those who joined this project were women because the men said that this kind of work was more for the women. The women wanted water, electricity, additional income, and later on land because they faced ejection from the landlord who owned the land they were occupying that time.

Organic feminist inquiry is sensitive to the culture of the women whose world the researcher seeks to understand, and fits her methodology into that culture. It means entering into the life rhythm of the women. And this requires an immersion into the context of the women's lives. This can be done only by seeking a method that will allow the researcher

to come face to face with the women in the place where they conduct most of their everyday lives.

Organic feminist inquiry means discovering the most natural settings the women can tell their stories, and using these settings as a way to understand their world.

Organic feminist inquiry, thus, is flexible. Although it might be useful to have a question to begin the inquiry, one must be open to the possiblity of having certain questions clarified and modified while in the field, as one becomes open to what is emerging. The theoretical issues we raise derive from the women's concrete experience of the power structures that limit their lives and their action for change. Organic feminist inquiry must lead us to understand the power structures in which the daily women's lives are enmeshed. We seek to understand this, not so much through quantification, but through developing a sense of what power structures must be examined because they have a bearing on the everyday lives of the women. But we also examine the women's engagement as social actors in the tension and conflict for change in these power structures.

Organic feminist inquiry is reflexive. It makes us reflect about ourselves as we reflect about the lives of the women we study. It makes us connect our own private troubles with those of the women we encounter and reflect where we are similar and where we differ. Doing this study, for example, made me more aware of my own struggle in the Philippine

movement. When I talk about women and the importance of seeing their particular situation in the analysis of the national situation in the Philipppines, I feel that nobody seems to listen to me. The men and even sometimes the women do not seem to take me seriously. But now I see more clearly from my analysis of the peasant women's lives and their struggles the importance of making visible the experience of poor women in explaining the dynamics of exploitation and resistance in the Philippines. It is in this reflexive process that we come to treat the subject of our research not only as source of information that we can force into a data set, but rather as one with whom we share our humanity. We come to treat them not only as objects of study, something easily dissectible like molecules of the physical world. We develop an empathic bonding that eventually will affect a re-arrangement in our commitments. In this process we also learn about ourselves and our place in the hierarchies as we get to learn about the women's daily lives and the power structures they are enmeshed. There is, thus, in organic feminist inquiry a recognition of the fact that there is a connection between research and our commitment to social justice. What we choose to study, the choices we make on how to research on what we choose to study, already speaks about where our commitments are -- how much we want to engage or keep distant from the social reality that binds or divides us.

I recognize the need to study further my

conceptualization of organic feminist inquiry, as a way to give my fieldwork experience a sociological name. What methodologies can we use to study gendered politics and resistance in the Third World in a way that we do not reproduce the hierarchies we have imposed on Third World women, men, and children? What methodologies can we explore so that we do not legitimize, what I call, the "theoretic imperialism" imbedded in studies premised within the Modernization perspective evolved from non-Third World experience? How do we study Third World women, whose lives are enmeshed in the politics of repression and the intersection of gender and class, in a way that we can begin from their concrete experience and perspectives? What methodologies can we explore that will make our research enterprise contribute to the empowerment of Third World people rather than reproduce their own oppression?

The mythodological issues and reflections I am bringing out here is within the spirit of emerging feminist scholarship that calls for a re-assessment about the way we study the world and the hierarchies that our methodologies can legitimize (McCall 1991; Cancian 1991). Although I am giving the way I conducted my fieldwork a name, I am not claiming that it is a new discovery. It has its traditions from the works of previous scholars on fieldwork. For example, it relates to Howard Becker's idea of giving importance to the knowledge and perspectives of people at the bottom in

understanding how a situation comes about and studying such situation as a process (Becker 1963). It also finds tradition from the Chicago School of fieldwork (Bulmer 1984), the difference is that I am trying it in another site, in a different culture, and in a militarized political context. As well, it has roots from Max Weber's idea of "verstehen" - getting into the subjective meanings of people in understanding their world. Similarly, it has roots in Karl Marx's idea that knowledge has material conditions. I find in his idea an implication for knowledge production: those who experience poverty and exploitation have something to say about such reality. Hence, if there is the feminization of poverty, then we can begin to examine that problem from the experience of poor women, especially Third World poor women who do not only experience poverty but also repression and gender hierarchy.

CHAPTER 3

AN ANALYTICAL-HISTORICAL OVERVIEW ON GENDER AND THE POLITICS OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND RESISTANCE IN THE PHILIPPINES

To understand the present situation of the Filipino peasant women and the development issues they are raising (which will be covered in the succeeding chapters), it is important to have at least a general understanding of their nation's historical experience. The Philippines provides a good example of the dynamics of European and North American colonialism and neo-colonialism in the politics of Third World development and underdevelopment, the contradictions it engenders, and the continuing forms of resistance these contradictions had preconditioned. My purpose in this chapter therefore, is to provide a brief historical overview of Philippine development/underdevelopment and the forms of organized resistance that evolved among the people. My focus would be on how colonialism and neocolonialism has interplayed in the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines and how gender is interlocked into this. I will touched on the basic issues of land ownership structure and the class formation that developed as control of resources became concentrated in a few people. Since the issue of land is a very important

issue for the Filipino peasantry it is but proper that I focus on it in this chapter. The role of the U.S. is given focus, since as a former colonial power in the Philippines, it has continued to intervene in Philippine internal affairs. I will also focus on the role of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in this dynamics. Since the neo-colonial politics of Philippine development/underdevelopment is not gender-blind, I will also focus on how in general Filipino women are exploited in the political economy.

The Pre-Colonial Philippine Political Economy and the Status of Filipino Women

The economy. Before its colonial conquest the Philippines had predominantly a subsistence economy (Salgado 1985, 3-4). The Filipinos produced for their own needs from local resources. They enjoyed the natural resources that are abundant in the Philippines -- food and forest resources and minerals, like gold. Living in subsistence villages, peasants, who also were part-time craftsmen, were relatively self-sufficient (Constantino 1975, 32).

The pre-colonial Filipinos already demonstrated technical ingenuity in extracting and producing finished products from these local resources to meet their other needs. For example, they grew cotton and made clothings from them. They built ships so skillfully. The native ships they built, the "caracoas", in fact surpassed the Spanish galleons (Salgado 1985, 5).

private ownership of land and other means of production (Constantino 1975, 39). Men and women participated equally in the community ownership of land.

To acquire lands the early Filipino communities generally used "Kaingin" -- a slash-and-burn way of clearing the forest. Sometimes this practice, although now prohibited by the government, is carried on to the present. For example, Ate Wona, a member of one of the village chapters of KAMMI, farms a small plot of low land she said she acquired through "kaingin".

In terms of inheritance rights, women also had equal access to parents' property and use-rights of land, since lineage was traced bilaterally (through male and female lines) (Wurfel 1988, 3).

However, despite this relative equality that women had in the early communalism and kinship relations, there was already a sexual division of labor that put more burden on the women. Although the women were just as integrated into production as the men were, in addition, reproductive tasks were relegated primarily to women. In some instances where the men had to engage in defending the community from enemy attacks, women even had to do the larger tasks of agricultural production (Eviota 1985, 30-31). In agricultural tasks, it was the men who generally prepared the land, while the women generally did the planting and harvesting (Mangahas 1987, 11).

Political life. The early political life of the pre-colonial Filipinos was not rigidly stratified. The village was administered by a village chief, who achieved such position through rendering service valuable to the survival of the community. He did not have absolute powers, and could be deposed by the barangay members. Although he assumed more political responsibilities, in most cases he continued being a farmer and/or crafstman (Constantino 1975, 33). Therefore, in a sense the chiefs were not really a separate political elite class, that we find in the present Philippine political class structure. There was "consultative decision-making among barangay elders", making the administrative system relatively democratic (Wurfel 1988, 3).

However, in this system of governing, the women did not have the same access to positions of power as the men. Although the women who belonged to the chief's family shared the privileges of the chief, they could inherit the position of chief only if there were no male heirs (Colin 1903).

Some women, because of their special skills and knowledge, gained public influence and power, as prietesses. These were the "babaylanes" or "catalonas" whose knowledge of herbal medicines gave them power over the reproduction and health of the community. They did not only cure the sick, presided over rituals (like weddings, births, funerals), but they also served as advisers to the chiefs by "foretelling the outcome of political events" (Mangahas 1987, 13).

Women and peonage. The early Filipino communities had a lending-borrowing practice called the peon system. This was the practice of borrowing or lending, in which case the debtor had to render unpaid labor service when he/she was unable to pay his/her debt. Rice was the most common commodity borrowed, with payment and interest in the same form. Interest was high because rice was considered an important commodity. It was expected that if the rice grains were used as seedlings for rice farming it would double its yield, and that lending rice was risky because there was the possibility of loss due to natural calamities. Usually one could become a peon by not being able to pay one's private debt or legal fines. One could cease being a peon by paying one's debt. In many cases the surplus produced by the peons belonged to the community, and were distributed in lean months (Constantino 1975, 33-34).

This debt-servitude practice, although benign since relationship in the community was mainly based on kinship, put women as the commodity for exchange. For example, there were a few cases when women (and children) were sold or given for damage reparations (Chirino 1903).

The practice of rendering labor service in payment for private debt persists in some cases to the present. In Mindoro for example, Ate Lalay worked for a few days on the land for a male member of the community as a payment for the money she borrowed from him. In my short stay in Albay, a province in

the Bicol Region, I also met a 13-year-old village girl who was rendering domestic service for a few weeks in her relative's house in the urban area as payment for her parents'debt. I learned later that the relative anyway gave her some money for her schooling, since she did not feel good about not paying her because of their kinship relations.

Filipino Women and the Colonial Transformation of Philippine Political Economy

Spanish colonization (1521-1896). Under 375 years of Spanish colonial domination, which came under the collusion of Church and the Spanish government, Philippine political economy transformed dramatically with corresponding impact on Filipino women. Spanish colonialism brought the breakdown of communalism and communal ownership of land, exacerbated gender inequality, disintegrated the subsistence economy, and took away from Filipinos control of their own labor and resources.

Communal lands were transformed into private property (Constantino 1975, 40). This set the beginnings of a landlord system of landownership that have resulted to the formation of a class of landless peasants.

The Filipinos virtually lost control over Philippine lands and its produce as the king of Spain decreed the introduction of "encomiendas" -- these were large tracts of lands (including the Filipino inhabitants) that were awarded to Spanish friars and imperial soldiers in the Philippines.

The Filipino people no longer produced for subsistence consumption, but for their colonial masters, since they had to pay tribute to the "encomienderos" in the form of crops and other agricultural products. Spanish colonial policy, however, exempted the chiefs and their descendants from paying tribute. In fact, in most cases they were the ones who collected the tribute from their communities and turned it over to the encomienderos, who generally did not live inside the encomienda.

Land registration and titling of lands was introduced to deal with conflicts in land acquisition. Land titles were placed in the name of the male heads of households, depriving women of direct ownership and control over decisions on the land (Mangahas 1985, 13).

Land titling, as a way to legalize private landownership especially among the colonizers, led to the landlessness of many Filipino peasants. It paved the way to what could be called legalized landgrabbing of ancestral lands. For example, the Maura Law of 1894 gave landholders only one year to acquire titles to their lands. Lands that remained untitled after the deadline were forfeited. Since there were many small landholders who were ignorant of the existence of such law, many peasants lost their lands. Approximately 400,000 peasants lost their landholdings, and consequently became tenants to big landowners, who to their surprise, claimed title to their (the peasants) lands. Many other peasants lost their lands

through the "Pacto de Retroventa", a law that required peasants to put up their lands as collaterals for loans. Many lost their lands when they failed to pay their loans (Philippine Peasant Institute 1989, 4).

Thus, while colonial private ownership of land created a small landed social class who did not directly till the land, it separated the basic means of production from those who tilled the land. It formed a class of landless men and women agricultural workers, who not only lost control of the use of the land, but who now also lost control of their labor and their produce. The Catholic Church, for example, became one of the largest landowner, with some Friar estates so huge that they included a whole town or more (Salgado 1985, 12). Other landed classes that developed from the privatization of landownership were the Spanish officials, the principalia (descendants of the pre-colonial village chiefs ("datus") who collaborated with the colonial rulers in ruling the Philippines, and the Chinese mestizos, who acquired huge landholdings that the Spaniards were even envious (Salgado 1985; Constantino 1975). At present, some of the landowners in the Philippines are of Chinese names, such as Cojuangco, whose name had been associated with a land scandal during my my fieldwork.

As a system of colonial administration, the encomienda developed a class structure that served colonial interests.

By its enforcement of forced labor, the encomienderos reduced the Filipino natives, with the exceptions of the village chiefs and their eldest sons, virtually as slaves. Majority of the Filipinos lost control of their labor -- their labor were unpaid, forced, and appropriated by foreign masters. Forced labor was required from male Filipinos from age 16 to 60 (Constantino 1975, 51). Often times forced labor separated the men from their families and communities for a long time leaving women, children, and old men to take most of household and farm work (Eviota 1983, 37). Colonialism, therefore, exploited the productive and reproductive roles of Filipino women in this system of labor appropriation. Although the women were seemingly freed from forced labor, they were in fact very much integrated into this colonial appropriation of labour power, but in an exploitative way.

Forced labor was most severe when Spain went into war against the Dutch. Since Spain needed war ships, the Filipinos' indigeneous skill in shipbuilding was exploited to produce for the war. Forced labor in shipbuilding took long months, resulting in some cases abandonment of the fields (Salgado 1985). Thus, colonialism not only took production away from subsistence production, but it also exploited the labor of Filipinos to support imperialist wars in order to maintain a foreign power which subjugated them (the Filipinos). Women, especially lower class women, maintained

this war through their productive and reproductive work.

Spanish colonialism not only took control of labour power away from the Filipinos, but it also took control of the fruits of their labor. For example, the colonial government imposed a system of expropriating resources, called the "bandala" (Constantino 1975, 40, 50). The "bandala" compelled each province to sell annual production quota to the government at a lower price. The people were not paid in cash, but in promissory notes, which the colonial government failed to pay. This was a source of great suffering and poverty among the majority of Filipinos. Under compulsion, they were forced to buy or borrow rice and other crops, so they would have something to turn over to the colonial government when surplus production was not avaliable (De la Costa 1965; Constantino 1975). Thus, this system of resource expropriation, deprived the Filipinos control over the use and decisions on the allocation of the fruits of their labor. In the context where the women assumed mostly the productive work in the fields, in the absence of male labor as a result of forced labor ("polo"), this system of expropriation diverted women's productive and reproductive work from meeting subsistence needs. Other than the social maintenance of their families, their productive and reproductive functions were now extended to maintain state officials and functionaries who perpetuated the colonial oppression of the Filipino people. The poor women's economic and household work then gained

political significance in so far as it linked them to the maintenance of the colonial state that exploited them.

Spanish colonization in the Philippines created the conditions which engendered the intersection of gender and class. The Spaniards established their colonial rule by coopting the native Filipino chiefs and their descendants into the colonial state bureaucracy. They did this by extending to them special priveleges, such as exempting them from their colonial exactions and giving them access to land and other resources. From administrators of pre-colonial communal lands, they (the native ruling class) then emerged as an intermediary class in imposing colonial policies on the communities they ruled. They came to be known as the principalia. This kind of class formation led to class divisions among women. For instance, women in this class were usually exempted from working in the fields while majority of the Filipino women were doing both farm and household work (Eviota 1985, 37). Hence, there developed a small class of Filipino women who attained a social position through their membership in the principalia. Eventually, they began to emulate the cult of domesticity of the Spanish women of the colonial ruling class. They began to associate prestige with not doing manual work. Like the Spanish women, they were served by servants (Eviota 1985). Class formation, therefore, allowed some women to enjoy comfort and wealth produced by the sweat of other Filipino women who were doing both productive and reproductive work.

Their lifestyle and self-interest were more akin to that of the Spanish colonial elite than to that of their own lower class fellow Filipino men and women. Gender and class formation, hence, became a colonial strategy of divide and rule.

Another major change in Philippine political economy, as a consequence of Spanish colonialism, was the development of export agriculture. Export agriculture not only dismantled subsistence agriculture, but it linked Philippine agricultural development to the capitalist world market. As agricultural production was geared to the demands of the foreign market, production for local needs was neglected. Colonialism and capitalism, hence, were interacting in the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines.

Export agriculture led to the growth of haciendas, large estates of lands primarily producing cash crops. Sugar, tobacco, coffee, copra, and abaca were the major export crops into which production was geared. The profitability of export crops, led friars, Spanish officials and their families, the principalia, as well as the rich Chinese traders to accumulate huge haciendas (IBON 1988, 27; Salgado 1985). In many cases, haciendas were enlarged through deforestation, grabbing of untitled ancestral lands from certain tribes, foreclosures of mortgaged lands of small farmers (Salgado 1985).

Export agriculture further widened the gap between the few rich and the poor majority. It brought greater wealth to

the landed class, who also now became landlord-capitalists who were separated from farm work. It developed a small middle class, composed mostly of Chinese traders, who controlled the internal marketing of the hacienda products from the provinces to the major centers like Manila. It profited the Spanish colonial officials who placed into government monopoly control of some export crops, like the tobacco monopoly. As well it benefitted the British and American firms, that were already in the country as early as 1822, and controlled the export-import business. Evenmore, it benefitted big capitalist firms based in England and the U.S. who were connected to their subsidiary companies in the Philippines. Capitalists in England and the U.S., for example, benefitted from the supply of cheap Philippine sugar for their food processing industries, like candies, chocolates, and soft drinks (Salgado 1985).

While export agriculture benefitted these classes, it impoverished the peasants who lost their lands, exploited the landless agricultural workers who were paid very cheap wages, and hurt consumers of the staple food, rice. Rice shortages and rice importation occured as cash crop production accelerated (Lachica 1963). As self-sufficiency in the staple food suffered, peasants, who were no longer producing crops they could eat, also suffered. Hence, the export-crop economy, brought wealth to those who did not till the land but controlled the land and its produce, but caused poverty among

the landless peasants who produced the wealth from the land.

The gearing of agricultural production to cash crops brought changes in rice production. Export crop production brought for the first time the formation of agricultural wage work in some haciendas, like sugar. The practice of agricultural wage work also got incorporated in rice production as more and more peasants became landless. The growth of haciendas also led to the institutionalization of sharecropping (IBON 1988, 27). This entailed the leasing out of lands owned by absentee landlord-friars to an "inquilino" (lessee) and charging them a fixed rent in the form of a share in the harvest. The "inquilinos" did not cultivate the land themselves, but got a share of the harvests produced by landless farmers to whom they apportioned the land for cultivation. Most of the "inquilinos" were members of the principalia or Chinese mestizos.

As sharecropping and waged work got incorporated into rice production there developed a class of people who accumulated harvests without being tillers of the land. Commercialization of rice, away from subsistence production and consumption, emerged as this class gained control of the marketing of rice as well as the milling of palay (unmilled rice). For example, the Chinese traders were able to take control of retail and wholesale of rice, in addition to their monopoly of the milling process (Eviota 1985, 60). The commercialization of rice, the staple crop, further

impoverished peasant men and women not only because now they ceased to be subsistence producers but also because the pricing of rice became intermingled with the dynamics of profit-making. The peasant producers certainly had no control of the price of rice which they produced, but had to buy them from the non-producers. In this situation it is obvious who benefited most from the commercialization and capitalist penetration of rice production.

Export agriculture exacerbated gender and class as women and men from the class of hacenderos acquired more wealth and greater access to higher education. The women from this class were able to aquire more luxury and education that the women and men who worked in their haciendas had no access (Salgado 1985). The women workers who produced the wealth from the haciendas were doubly exploited as they did productive and reproductive work. As the hacendero families were able to send their children abroad to study, there emerged a small class of foreign-educated male elite -- the "illutrados". They took economic and political leadership positions in the state bureaucracy that ensured the reproduction of development policies that preserved the interests of the class they belonged.

In the final analysis, the scenario I have described above show that colonialism and capitalism interacted in transforming the pre-colonial communual subsistence Philippine political-economy. This process exacerbated gender and class,

and caused greater poverty among the majority of Filipino men and women. In the context of increasing poverty, majority of the poor women who continued to do both productive and reproductive work more heavily the brunt of this underdevelopment and exploitation.

American colonization (1896-1946). American colonization in the Philippines, although justified with the rhetoric of liberating the Filipinos from Spanish colonial rule and preparing them for self-government, was largely motivated by U.S. economic interest in the Philippines and in the Pacific. American colonization in the Philippines needed the kind of class formation that Spanish colonial politics evolved in the Philippines. Hence, American colonial policy reproduced this class structure. It coopted the "ilustrados" into its colonial ruling apparatus. It protected the ilustrados' haciendas and even gave them opportunities to accumulate more land (Salgado 1985, 25). Since the ilustrados did not cultivate these lands themselves, it further increased tenancy and landlessness among the poor peasantry.

It was to the economic interest of the U.S. that American colonial policy would keep intact the structure of land ownership in the Philippines. Private ownership of land paved the way for more American private corporations to own lands in the Philippines. For example, sugar lands got concentrated in the hands of corporations, forcing many peasants to work as agricultural workers at starvation wage (Pelzer). With

more American corporations owning large tracts of land, they were also able to control the use of these lands to promote export crops that were needed in the U.S. market (like sugar, coconuts, abaca, timber, rubber, pineapple). On the other hand, American corporations ignored the development of export crops that would compete with American products. This was, for example, the case with the Philippine tobacco export -- the American colonialists changed the Filipinos' consumption habits toward preference for the U.S. Virginia tobacco instead of the local Philippine tobacco. From an exporter of Philippine tobacco, the Philippines became an importer of U.S. tobacco products.

Thus, U.S. colonial economic policy was one of extracting raw materials for U.S. indutries while controlling Philippine market for U.S. manufactured goods. U.S. colonial control of the Philippines came along with its need for the globalization of its economy arising from its capitalist industrial development. Capitalist imperialism became imperative as U.S. economy needed a global sourcing and marketing for its expanding industries. To insure this need, American colonialists established free trade relations between the Philippines and the United States. With free trade, American factories were assured of cheap raw materials and a captured market for its processed goods that local U.S. market could not absorb. This being so, Philippine imports from the U.S. increased to 64% in 1933 from 9% in 1899, and Philippine

exports to the U.S. escalated to 83% from 18% in the same period (Hartendorp 1958).

While U.S. colonialism led to greater capitalist penetration of Philippine political economy, it did not entirely transform the feudal (landlord system) agricultural economy that began during the Spanish colonization. Concentration of landownership among a few continued and in fact got worse. Hence, the co-existence of different modes of production that we find in the Philippines to this day --it is feudal, semi-feudal, and capitalist. Feudal elements are articulated in relations of agricultural production where landless peasants work as tenants on landlords' lands and get a share of the crop they produce as dictated by the landlords. Producing for the landlord, they shoulder all production costs, but the share they get often is not enough to meet their subsistence needs. Semi-feudal elements are articulated in production relations where landless peasants work as waged agricultural workers for big landlords (sometimes absentee landlords). Semi-feudal elements can also be found in private corporations that hire administrators to manage the labor and production on the corporate lands so that they do not get to deal directly with the agricultural workers. Most often workers are hired on a seasonal basis. Capitalist elements are articulated both in industrial and agricultural production where agricultural workers work for a wage for the corporate plantation of a local or foreign-owned company, usually

agribusiness corporations. Only a few of the landless agricultural workers, which comprise the bulk of the peasantry, have been absorbed into this corporate farms on a relatively permanent basis.

With the penetration of colonial capitalism into Philippine development, rural women's and men's work also became increasingly linked to the exploitative dynamics in the capitalist world system. For example, the entry of more American manufactured goods into the Philippines displaced native rural industries that were under the control of Filipinos. Consequently, labor was displaced, and unemployment and poverty increased. This was the case, for instance, with the native weaving industry that was the source of income for a good number of women, since this industry was largely dominated by women. As U.S. textile flooded Philippine market, the native weaving industry was undermined. It displaced Filipino rural women from their means of income and pushed them to agricultural wage work or tenancy. There was in fact an increase in the number of agricultural female workers from 90,191 in 1903 to 474,819 in 1939 (U.S. Bureau of Census 1905, Commission of the Census 1941). Male agricultural labor also increased in the same period, from 39% in 1903 to 69% in 1939 (Ibid).

With increased supply of agricultural labor available, American capitalists in control of export crop haciendas and other landlords could now profit from very cheap agricultural

wage. In fact, real wages during the American colonial period was lower than during the Spanish colonial period (Eviota 1985, 95). Both men and women workers were paid very low wages, but women were even paid much lower. For instance, in export sugar haciendas, male workers received wages only from P0.50 to P0.75 per day, while women and children received only P0.35 to P0.50 per day. In rice production, male workers were paid P0.80 per day, while women workers were paid P0.60 per day (Eviota 1985). Both wage levels were half below the per capita income level considered adequate for minimum subsistence at that time (Kurihara 1945).

It was not to the interest of American capitalist expansionism and accumulation to promote an industrialized Philippine political economy. Investment in manufacturing was minimal, if there were it was more of extractive industries, canning, and mining that were geared for export. Hence, excess farm labor, displaced from greater concentration of land and from the undermined native industries, were not absorbed into the manufacturing economy. American colonial capitalism in the Philippines therefore increased unemployment and exacerbated poverty. Under such conditions, Filipino labor was made mobile to be more exploited in the United States as cheap migrant labor. This was clearly illustrated by the emigration of mostly Filipino men to work under harsh conditions in the plantations in Hawaii and California. Filipino women who were left behind by their migrant husbands

had to bear more responsibilities in production and reproductive work. American capitalist growth needed not only extraction of raw materials from its colonies, but also the importation of colonial labor necessary to split the labor market for profit maximization. In this dynamics, the Filipino peasants and workers became one of the exploited classes in propelling capitalist growth in the U.S.

Along with its political and economic strategies, American capitalist colonialism in the Philippines also used education as its ideological tool. The American colonialists promoted public education. Through education American cultural imperialism was given an institutional medium through which American-oriented ideas and colonial mentality could be propagated among the Filipinos. "U.S. educators taught Filipinos that they were inferior, the Americans, superior" (Schirmer and Shalom 1987, 44). This was an ideological strategy to combat the growing nationalism among the Filipinos that sparked during their armed revolution against Spanish colonization. The American colonialists were aware of the fact that they were subjugating a people who just experienced liberation from a colonial power. American colonization therefore had to devise multiple ways of control. An educational system that could present American white supremacy, and "teach Filipinos to accept an image of the U.S. as a generous benefactor and to forget the nationalist heroes and struggles of their past" (Schirmer and Shalom 1987, 45) -

- was a subtle, effective way of conguest. Although the American colonialists incorporated some Filipino ilustrados in its administrative bureaucracy, the department of education was never entrusted to Filipino leadership (Constantino 1966). Americans always headed this department -- an indication that the ideological apparatus of colonial conquest could only be under the control of the colonialists, if it was to accomplish what it intended to do.

The promotion of public education also exacerbated class and gender. It produced a small elite class of men and women oriented to a Western-oriented development. Because of their higher education, and privileged class, they were able to get positions in the economy and in the government. A few women, especially those from the landed class or ilustrados were able to acquire some professional training, although majority of those who got professional training were men. Hence, there developed an elite class of petty bourgeoisie, whose basic distinction from the working class was their level of education and that they did not do manual work. This new American-bred colonized Filipino elite eventually occupied economic and political leadership after the Amrican colonialists gave the Philippines pseudo-independence in 1946. Access to education also evolved a petty bourgeoisie, with a vascillating sense of nationalism as they were exposed to American colonial education. Thus, the U.S. neo-colonial control of Philippine political economy was then ensured.

On the other hand, majority of the poor men and women were unable to acquire higher education. They formed the bulk of the peasantry and working class in the Philippines. The women who were not absorbed into agricultural work, migrant work, or in the small manufacturing sector, either turned to domestic service or prostitution (Eviota 1985).

Under deteriorating condition, poor men and women resorted to domestic work, but more women were relegated into it. For women, domestic work increased from 95,016 in 1903 to 230,474 in 1948, while for the men it increased from 51,044 to 146,296 in the same years (U.S. Bureau of Census 1905, 1954). By 1939, female domestic servants comprised 18% (next to female farm laborers which comprised 37%) of the female gainful workers 10 years old and over (Commission of the Census 1941). Poor women worked as servants in the homes of the wealthy families, or even in the households of the petty bourgeoisie who wanted to be freed from housework when they come home from work. Women in these households, having relatively good income could now afford to hire lower class women to do housework for them. But domestic workers usually received inadequate wages, incommensurate to the live-in work they rendered. While domestic service enabled middle class or elite women to lighten their reproductive work, for poor women it was an underpaid work. Thus, the increase in poor women as well as men in the domestic service indicated the widening gap between the few rich and the poor majority. Through their low-

waged, low-prestige domestic work, poor men and women actually was maintaining the small elite and middle class who benefited from the political economy but which made many Filipinos poor. To this day, domestic work is generally the only option for women from peasant families because of poverty and lack of access to education.

Prostitution became an option for poor women when American enterpreneurs began to take control of women's sexuality as a commodity for making profits. American enterpreneurs set up cabarets (dance halls), which were considered prostitution fronts and a source of venereal disease (Brown 1917). With the establishment of cabarets, control of women's sexuality as a form of organized business became established during U.S. capitalist colonization. Cabarets became popular as a form of recreation among the better-off classes. Thus, again prostitution, indicated the worsening conditions of the poor while a few were getting richer. Poor women experienced greater exploitation as commoditization of their sexuality became a source of profit for American businessmen who owned and controlled the dance halls. Organized control of poor women's sexuality, thus, became entangled with American capitalist control of Philippine political economy. To this day, a similar form of commoditization takes place as prostitution is promoted along with the promotion of the tourist industry as a way to bring in more dollar reserve for the increasing Philippine foreign

debt. There is also a concentration of prostitution around the U.S. bases in the Philippines, where the rest and recreation centers, catering to American servicemen, are owned and controlled by local and foreign capitalists.

Along with military suppression, U.S. colonial politics in the Philippines also involved the shaping of an armed forces that would be oriented to American ideology (Shirmer and Shalom 1987). The formation of U.S.-trained Filipino militia was actually a strategy of low-intesity conflict, in which these U.S.-trained local forces would be fighting their own Filipino guerilla forces resisting colonial domination. It was then a strategy of counter-insurgency against nationalist revolutionary forces in the Philippines. It was a way to divide the people, a strategy of divide and rule. As well, it was also a way to fight the Filipino people with little casualty to the American soldiers. In fact, the U.S.colonialists saw that "the enlistment of Filipinos was essential because it would send U.S. troops home and quiet protest there" (Schirmer and Shalom 1987, 41). The formation of a Philippine armed forces, oriented to American ideology, was a way to ensure continued American military presence in the Philippines in the neo-colonial phase of Philippine-American relations. The present Armed Forces of the Philippines is, in fact, a product of this American neo-colonial politics in the Philippines. It was here where the interlocking dynamics of capitalism, imperialism, and

militarism could be seen in the politics of Philippine underdevelopment. In this dynamics, Filipino women always suffered as victims of military rape, as a form of military torture and repression.

With these economic, political, ideological, and military strategies of colonial control and conquest, the U.S. was well on its way to making the Philippines its neo-colony which persists to this day. I will now analyze the patterns of continuing U.S. interventionism in the Philippines from 1946 to the present. It is important to include this here since the politics of AMIHAN (which I deal on the following chapters) include a resistance to the patterns of U.S. interventionism in the Philippines.

The Neo-Colonial Philippine Political Economy: Patterns of Continuing U.S. Interventionism (1946-present)

Even after the Philippines gained independence from American colonial rule in 1946, the United States continued, to this day, to intervene in Philippine affairs. By interventionism I refer to the mechanisms of control the United States exerts over the Philippines and the articulation of ideologies to justify such control. Interventionism is the U.S. neo-colonial strategy in maintaining its foothold on the Philippine political economy. The goal of U.S. interventionism is the creation of social conditions that will maintain U.S. imperial presence in the Philippines without directly ruling it.

The continuing interventionism of the U.S. in the Philippines has exhibited the following interlocking patterns: a) domination of Philippine political economy, b) maintenance of the U.S. military bases and involvement in counter-insurgency, and c) cooperation in the consolidation of a ruling class allied to U.S. interests in the Philippines. The following sections elaborate on these patterns.

Domination over the Philippine political economy

With the granting of Philippine independence in 1946, the U.S. government ensured that the structure of U.S.-Philippine relations would basically remain unchanged. The U.S. sought to continue its dominant control of the Philippine economy so as to protect its established interests. But under a neo-colonial relationship, the mechamisms of control had to change so as to make U.S. presence in the Philippines appear legitimate.

The first mechanism of control which the U.S. was able to establish involved its legislation of full parity rights for citizens of the United States, U.S.corporations and businesses. This was provided through the Bell Trade Act of 1946, later amended in 1955 as the Laurel-Langley Agreement. These acts legitimized and politically institutionalized a continued U.S. control of Philippine economy. It tied the Philippine political economy to the U.S. by perpetuating the system of "free trade" that made the Philippines a supplier

of cheap raw materials for U.S. industries and a market for U.S. manufactured goods -- 2 major needs the U.S. saw important for its own capitalist expansion.

The Philippine Constitution had specifically reserved the right to develop and exploit Philippine public utilities and natural resources for Filipinos or to corporations that were at least 60% Filipino-owned. With the U.S. demand for full parity rights, particularly in the Laurel-Langley Agreement, U.S. citizens, business corporations and investors could have 100% ownership in all areas of the economy. All other foreign nationals could have no more than 40% ownership (Schirmer and Shalom 1987, 87, 95). This mainly explains why U.S. corporations at present control approximately 80% of foreign investments in the Philippines.

When the terms of the Laurel-Langley expired in 1974 under the Marcos dictatorship, U.S. economic interest in the Philippines became safeguarded through the national economic ideology of "export-oriented development through foreign investment". The Marcos government adopted an open door policy for foreign investment, liberalizing restrictions on the activities of transnational corporations, with the U.S. transnational corporations taking the lead. U.S. economic interventionism was mainly channelled through bilateral and multilateral development aid agencies, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which are largely controlled by the U.S. (Payer 1974; Bello, Kinley, and Elinson

1984; Simbulan 1985).

Through its policy of tied aid (Payer 1974), the World Bank and the IMF were able to impose economic policies that were protective of transnational capital. This included the devaluation of the peso, import liberalization, wage freezes, and the repressive control of labor. The IMF and the World Bank required such conditions for the granting of loans which were largely geared towards infrastructural development. Yet such development projects were mainly designed to provide support services for multinational corporations in the Philippines (Brillantes 1986).

Under the Aquino government, IMF and World Bank policies continue to control the nature of Philippine development and underdevelopment. In March 1989, the Aquino government submitted the Letter of Intent (LOI) to the IMF which contains the Philippine government's promise to implement the conditions of the IMF for the granting of a $1.3 billion loan. Among the major conditions were price decontrol, import liberalization, labor control, promotion of export-oriented development, promotion of foreign investment, and a privatization scheme which involves the eventual turning over of government-controlled corporations or institutions to private enterprise.

What has been the impact of this continuing U.S. economic interventionism in the Philippines? One of the crucial impact is the undermining and sabotaging of alternative economic

policies that are more nationalist and redistributive -- policies that are demanded by grassroot organizations such as the KMU (National Union of Filipino Workers), the KMP (National Peasant Movement of the Philippines), and AMIHAN (National Federation of Peasant Women). Among such policies are: a) controls on multinational corporations, b) the nationalization of lands owned by multinational corporations, c) free distribution of lands to landless peasant men and women, d) improvement of workers' wages and conditions, e) greater nationalist industrialization through the Filipinization of basic industries and the expansion of local industries more responsive to domestic needs; and f) the promotion of women's rights as women peasants and as women workers.

These demands are basic to the social construction of Filipino economic and political self-determination. Predictably, these are the demands U.S. interventionism most wants to contain. Continued U.S. interventionism in the Philippines requires a pre-condition of inequality and dependency. The containment of these demands is one of the major causes of poverty of the majority and enrichment of the few in Philippine society. About 70% fall below poverty level, while a family in the richest strata of the social pyramid earns an average family income 752 times more than that of the family in the poorest group (National Census and Statistics).

IMF policies have exacerbated poverty, landlessness, and exploitation of cheap labor of Filipino men, women, and children. In Free Trade Zones, the development of which was encouraged and funded by the IMF, multinational corporations have turned skilled educated Filipino women into a pool of cheap expendable labor force. There is a "feminization of export-oriented labor" (Santos and Lee 1989) in these Free Trade Zones where approximately 85-90% of the workers are women, concentrated in textile, garment, microelectronic semi-assembly work. Working under subhuman wage, poor housing, exploitative working conditions and labor repression, these Filipino women produce consummer goods for the foreign market, especially for the U.S. market. Hence, while in the American colonial period Filipino women were displaced from the native textile industry where they were predominant, now in the neo-colonial Philippine political economy, they are absorbed in the foreign dominated textile and garment industry as cheap, repressed labor for transnational capital. In export agribusiness, women and children are drawn into farm work without fair remuneration, if not at all unpaid, especially if they do their work along with the husband or father who receive the wage (Eviota 1986).

IMF policies in the Philippines have also brought the Filipino people into a debt bondage. Philippine foreign debt has consistently escalated from $599.5 million in 1965 to $28.9 billion in 1988, and expected to increase to $34.1 in

1992 (IBON DataBank). A $29.9 billion debt means a draining of approximately $3.6 billion annually out of the Philippine treasury for interest and principal payments (Freedom from Debt Coalition 1989, 2). Sixty percent of Filipino export earnings does not at all trickle down but instead goes to debt repayments (Santos and Lee 1989, 12). Even more resources are expected to leave the Philippines as its debt servicing increases to $6.6 billion in 1990 from $3 billion in 1986 (IBON 1986). Under a debt crisis the Philippines keeps borrowing in order to pay what it borrowed. One of the impact of this debt bondage that is directly felt by the poor in the Philippines, that I had observed during my fieldwork, is the increase of prices, especially the price of rice, the staple food. In fact the peasant women I came in contact were very worried about the increase in the price of rice. The increase in the price of rice resulted from the requirement of the IMF Letter of Intent (LOI) to limit the NFA's rice subsidy and allow the privarization of rice trading (Philippine Daily Globe 1989, 6 April). Hence, the IMF is the invisible hand that propels the Philippine free market economy that thrives along a capitalist relations of production -- a source of wealth for a few but more poverty for the poor.

In the dynamics of debt servicing poverty serves transnational capital as well. For example, under the increasing number of female migration, poor women's labor, especially from the rural areas have become a commodity for

export by the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency as part of the Philippine government's drive to increase dollar reserves for its foreign debt payment. Filipino women temporary migrant workers are generally employed as domestic workers, nurses, entertainers, and service workers in the foreign labor market. Part of their remittances are used for foreign debt payment and servicing, but these are remittances earned under exploitative and dehumanizing conditions (Santos and Lee 1989, 40).

Maintenance of U.S. military bases and counter-insurgency

The role of the U.S. military bases. Economic policies alone would be inadequate to maintain U.S. control of the Philippine political economy and its imperial position in the Pacific. Thus, as a condition for the granting of Philippine independence in 1946, the U.S. government demanded the retention of large tracts of lands for U.S. military bases under the Military Bases Agreement (March 14, 1947) and a direct influence and control of the Armed Forces of the Philippines through the Military Assistance Agreement (March 21, 1947).

The Military Bases Agreement provided the U.S. with extensive military base facilities with no restrictions on their use. It prohibits the Philippine government from granting base rights to any other country and it allows the U.S. to recruit Filipino citizens into the U.S. Armed Forces

(Military Base Agreement March 14, 1947). The Base Agreement was supposed to terminate in September 1991, but the U.S. had been pressuring for its retention in the face of growing grassroot resistance for its removal. At present there are 5 U.S. military bases in the Philippines: San Miguel Naval Communication complex, USAF Wallace Air Station, Camp John hay leave and Recreation Center, and the 2 major installations -- Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base which remain the largest U.S. military bases outside continental U.S. Subic Naval Base alone occupies 36,000 acres of land area and Clark Air Base occupies over 117,000 acres of land area in a country where almost 80% of the peasantry are landless.

Involvement in counter-insurgency. The military bases, as extensions of the U.S. imperial state, have not only been used to justify U.S. interventionism in Philippine affairs, but its facilities actually have been used to intervene in Philippine internal politics. This intervention has taken the pattern of counter-insurgency (Simbulan 1985, 169). U.S. miltary personnel in the Philippines have been consistently involved in suppressing nationalist organizations who work for Philippine self-determination and sovereignty over the nature of Philippine development. Throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s the military bases have been used to suppress peasant revolts for land and fundamental structural changes in the Philippine political economy (Simbulan, 1985:170). For instance, in the 1950s Air Force Col. Edward Lansdale directed

American support in the suppression of the HUKS and was lauded by the U.S. media as "one of the CIA's great unpublished victories" (U.S. News and World Report 1967, 13 March). In the 1970s and 1980s the U.S. government propped up the Marcos dictatorship with massive military arms and financial aid and justified such aid as "rental" for the U.S. bases. George Bush specifically praised Marcos as the most democratic man in Asia. U.S. military base personnel were directly involved in actual combat operations against the New People's Army in provinces where the NPA were concentrated (Bello and Rivera 1977).

Today under the Aquino government, the U.S. is even more deeply involved in counter-insurgency. In March of 1987, the U.S. government had authorized over $10 M to the CIA in the Philippines for increased covert operations (Alliance for Philippine Concerns 1988). In 1988, U.S. tax payers funded 83% of all procurement, maintenance and operation costs for the Philippine military. In 1989 the Bush administration proposed for $360 million of military and security-related aid to the Philippines for 1990 (Synapses 1989).

This funneling of U.S. resources in support of the military indicates the U.S. government's continued support for counter-insurgency strategy in the Philippines, today known as Low Intensity Conflict (LIC). Essentially, LIC is a method of suppressing dissent through the use of paramilitary forces "to fight indigenous people struggling

for freedom from U.S. control and domination" (Clark et.al., 1987, 39). The use of paramilitary forces under the Aquino government has taken the form of vigilantes being integrated into the Philippine counter-insurgency. There are approximately 200 vigilante groups in the Philippines and their violence is directed against suppressing rural and urban protest movements. According to a Fact-Finding Mission to the Philippines headed by Ramsey Clark in March 20-30, 1987, U.S. support in the formation of these vigilantes was indicated by General Singlaub who spent several months in the Philippines advising right-wing politicians, businessmen, and military officers to "organize vigilante groups to protect themselves from communism" (Clark et.al., 1978, 20). LIC is now often referred to by politicized groups in the Philippines as "Cory's total war". Since its goal is to defeat the New People's Army by paralyzing all forms of support to it--ideological, political, economic -- it has directed its violence and harassments to civilian populations in areas where the military suspects there are NPA guerillas. Therefore, bombings of village areas and forced evacuations of village people have been conducted especially after Aquino has ordered the military to "unsheathed the sword of war" in a speech to the Philippine Military on March 22, 1987.

Military operations displaced more than 200, 000 Filipinos nationwide between January 1988 and March 1989. In the island of Negroes in the central Philippines alone, 31,000

people have fled their homes since April 22, 1989 and took refuge in schoolhouses, churches, and cockpits. Approximately 100 people, 55 of whom were children, died from inadequate food and sanitation (Church Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines 1989, 1).

The Aquino government's commitment to militarization as a major part of its political economic development program is indicated by the fact that: 1) it has allocated 25 billion pesos for defense and only 4.5 billion pesos for agrarian reform (KMP 1989, 10); 2) it has also appropriated 585 million pesos for the organization of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU) -- which, in fact, integrates vigilante groups into the Armed Forces of the Philippines. These CAFGU units are being trained, armed, and supervised by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The Aquino government calls these CAFGU forces "reservists" or "citizen soldiers" (Forum for Rural Concerns Human Rights Desk 1989, 21). In other words, it is a way to make civilians into combatants -- a strategy of counter-insurgency to make civilians fight civilians. In this way, the Aquino government is able to manufacture an image of the Philippine Armed Forces as a "reformed Army" while militarization intensifies. It is also a divide and rule strategy at a time when there is a growing organized resistance from below.

Springboards for intervention into other countries. Besides being used for counter-insurgency in the Philippines,

the U.S. bases have also been used as springboards for intervention into other countries. For instance, the U.S. used Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base in its military intervention in Vietnam from 1957-1975, in supporting right-wing rebels in Indonesia and the Koumintang troops at Quemoy-Matsu in 1958, in staging military incursions in Kampuchea in 1975, and in intervening in the Middle East in the 1980s (Simbulan 1985, 195). Furthermore, under the unrestricted use of the bases, the U.S. stores nuclear weapons, including first-strike weapons. This endangers the security of the Filipino people as it invites attacks from other nuclear superpower. It also violates Filipino sovereignty as it violates a provision in the Constitution which states that the Philippines "consistent with the national interest, adopts and pursues a policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in its territory" (Article II, Declaration of Principles and State Policies, Section VIII).

Sexual exploitation of Filipino women. Along with its military impact, the presence of the U.S. bases have also thrived on the sexual exploitation of poor Filipino women. Legalized prostitution, including child prostitution, concentrates in the immediate vicinity of the military bases. It has turned women's sexuality into commodities for exchange for the sexual needs of American soldiers and servicemen. Local and foreign businessmen and capitalists who control the profits from the rest and recreation establishments around

these bases argue:

> "Instead of endagering our decent and respectable women to the possibility of rape and other forms of sexual abuse, better provide an outlet for the soldiers' sexual urge and at the same time make money out of it" (Moselina 1981).

Consolidation of a ruling class allied to U.S. interest

The U.S. economic and military interventionism in the Philippines cannot be facilitated without a consolidated ruling class who would see the reproduction of their class, maintenance of their power, and preservation of their interest allied to the economic and military presence of the U.S. in the Philippines. Through the power of such a ruling class the U.S. is able to control the Philippine political economy without directly ruling it. Andre-Gunder Frank (1974) refers to such a ruling class as the "lumpen-bourgeoisie" whose class position depends on its alliance with international capital and military imperialism. Historically, the U.S. government has been able to intervene in consolidating the power of this ruling class. For instance, in the 1950s U.S. CIA planned to assassinate the presidential candidate Claro M. Recto who expressed nationalist sentiments and opposition to the U.S. bases. The CIA was involved in ensuring the presidency for Ramon Magsaysay who was a U.S. base supporter.

In the 1960s, an emergence of grassroot awareness about the elitism of traditional politics spurred the demand for a more participative coalition government. The U.S. saw Marcos plan to declare Martial Law as a way to contain the new

emerging political consciousness. Before Marcos declared Martial Law, he met secretly with U.S. Ambassador Henry Byroade and asked how Washington would react to his stringent measures. Byroade promised Marcos full U.S. support for his Martial Law scheme (Kessler 1981). Martial Law not only served the class interest of Marcos and his cronies but also that of the U.S. ruling class. Many of the leaders of the emerging grassroot politics that would decentralize the economic and political power of the ruling elite were liquidated.

After the downfall of Marcos, the U.S. government saw Corazon Aquino as a possible ally for U.S. continued economic and military presence in the Philippines. The U.S.government's support for the ascendancy of the Aquino government was not indicative of any feminist concern. The U.S. government supported Aquino because she comes from the traditional ruling class who does not carry a change agenda that will radically transform Philippine political-economy and challenge U.S. foothold on the Philippine economic and political development. Shortly before Aquino's trip to the U.S. in 1986, the White House urged Aquino to stop seeking peace resolutions with the New People's Army, the revolutionary army of the underground movement in the Philippines (Shirmer and Shalom 1987, 404). In response, the Aquino government refused to consider the legitimate demand of the National Democratic Front to pull out the military presence in the rural areas during the ceasefire

negotiations in 1986. It conceded to the IMF policies in the Philippines, opted to intensify counter-insurgency, and removed the more progressive elements in its administration. Furthermore, it legislated a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) that indicates no firm political will to redistribute land to the majority of landless peasants and agricultural workers. Neither has it shown genuine concern for protecting workers rights. All these are political decisions that reflect the alliance of the Aquino government and the U.S. imperial state.

This alliance between U.S. interventionism and the Philippine ruling elite has excluded peasants, workers and women from a meaningful participation in Philippine polity. Their political exclusion has not only brought about their increasing oppression and poverty, but has stifled radical change in Philippine society that would benefit the present and future generations of the majority of the Filipino people.

Yet, the politically organized groups in the Philippines have persisted in resisting the politics of neo-colonialism in the Philippines. Their present resistance for self-determination and national sovereignty is a continuation of their struggle for decolonization they know the Filipinos before them did not fully accomplish in 1946. During my field work in Summer 1989 in the Philippines, I have witnessed a growing open mass resistance to the politics of underdevelopment and exploitation that result from the

legacies of colonialism, the interlocking patterns of U.S. interventionism, and the class and gender structure in the Philippines. Various sectors of Philippine society, peasants, workers, youth, women, religious groups, professionals, and students are consolidating their forces. They are recommitting themselves to the importance of mass organization, education, and mobilization as strategies towards people's empowerment and in putting direction to the change process that will provide legitimate expression of the Filipino people's political will. They are continuing to form coalitions to give their resistance a national character.

Given this overview, I will now examine in the following chapters the everyday lives of the peasant women as they are enmeshed into the dynamics of underdevelopment and exploitation and the politics of their resistance.

CHAPTER 4

THE DYNAMICS OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF THE PEASANT WOMEN OF MINDORO (KAMMI)

Often times development policy makers take the growth or decline of GNP as a major indicator of a nation's level of economic development or progress. While GNP may give some indication of a nation's level of economic growth or productivity, it cannot account for many things. First, growth in GNP does not take into account how that growth has been achieved and at whose expense growth is pursued. Rightly so, since GNP growth is a notion evolved from a seemingly neutral stance on capitalist development, the essence of development premised on Modernization. But development is not neutral, as chapter 3 demonstrates. Viewing development as if it is neutral becomes problematic, in a context where past and existing development policies are protective of the interest of a landed local ruling class or the interest of foreign investment that may be largely controlled by a neo-colonial power -- as in the case of many Third World countries, like the Philippines.

Secondly, GNP growth as a development indicator, does not take into account how growth gets distributed and the dynamics

of the power structures that concentrates wealth, resources, and control of development decisions in a particular class. Thirdly, GNP growth does not take into account how working class women and peasant women get exploited and repressed in a particular way in the process of achieving growth in the context of transnational capital. Fourthly, GNP growth as a measure of development, views development only in economic terms, propelled by private investment. It does not see economic development in the context of integrated and social development that give significance to democratization in opposition to a repressive state. Repression and militatization has become part of the development package imposed on the Third World, and this has tremendous impact on the lives of men, women, and children. And lastly, GNP growth does not take into account the resistances that development based on Modernization engenders and the alternative views on development that organized resistance in the Third World evolve.

By taking into account all these aspects that GNP growth, as an indicator of development, leaves unexamined and unexplained, one can get a better understanding of the politics of development/underdevelopment in the Third World. One of the ways to do this is to examine how these abstractions enter into the everyday lives of Third World poor women in underdeveloped areas of the world. In fact, Caren Grown and Gita Sen (1987) argue that Third World

development and underdevelopment must be viewed from the perspective of poor women, that the experience of poor women must be the beginning of any analysis of Third World development.

In this chapter I attempt to understand the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines from the experience of the Peasant Women of Mindoro (KAMMI). I examine their everyday lives as peasant women, and view from their vantage point the structures of power that keep them poor. Viewing them not as passive victims of Philippine underdevelopment, I examine in chapters 5 and 6 the politics of their local resistance and compare them with the national politics of AMIHAN (the National Federation of Peasant Women into which KAMMI is federated), which I discuss in chapter 7. In the last chapter, I draw out alternative views on women and development that chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 imply.

Several interlocking power structures keep the peasant women poor, exploited, and repressed. These power structures are the following: a) the feudal and semi-feudal mode of production (the structure of land ownership and the relations of production that evolve from it, who controls the allocation of farm produce and the terms of production); b) the system of informal credit (usury); c) privatization of food production (indicated by the lack of government subsidy on rice production); d) the commercialization of rice and the power block of rice traders; e) capitalist economic

imperialism (indicated particularly by the Green Revolution and the IMF); and f) the militaristic state (militarization). In the following sections I view these systems from the everyday worlds of the peasant women, showing their impact on the women and on their families.

The Feudal and Semi-Feudal Modes of Production and the Peasant Women's Lives

In the previous chapter I noted that that one of the legacies of colonialism and neo-colonialism in the Philippines is the development of feudal and semi-feudal modes of agricultural production that co-exist with capitalist relations of production. In Mindoro, which is mainly an agricultural province, the feudal and semi-feudal relations of production is united in the work of the peasantry, who do not own the lands they till and therefore do not control the products of the labor in the land. Large tracts of lands are owned by a few, mostly absentee landlords, who live outside the village or the province.

Peasant women as producers and consumers. Contrary to the implicit assumption of the "integrationist perspective" on women and development that women are not integrated in productive work, the peasant women of KAMMI are in fact very much integrated in this system of agricultural production. All the peasant women say that they do both farm work and housework. Ate Ara articulates this clearly: "The center of our work is the farm ("bukid") and the home ("bahay")." But

the integration of the peasant women in this feudal and semi-feudal relations of agricultural production is such that they are exploited in their productive and reproductive roles. For example, as producers most of the peasant women produce not for subsistence but for those who own the land. Since most of the women do not own the land they till, they have no control over what is done with their production. While landlords do not work on the land they get a substantial share in the harvest of the land. Let me concretely illustrate this.

Almost all of the peasant women are landless who are engaged in rice production, as are most men in Mindoro. A few big landlords and a small number of middle-level landlords own most of the rice lands on which most of the women work. Four of the women own a parcel of land, about one hectare a piece, but the output of such a small piece of land does not meet their families' needs. This is the case for example of Ate Gansa and Ate Delita. Two of the peasant women work on the land that they have acquired by clearing a forest area ("kaingin"), but their position is very precarious because they have no title to the land. Techay for example showed me the small plot of rice land she planted on an upland area she had cleared herself. She said the land belongs to someone outside the village who has title to the land which has been uncleared for years. The owner told her that she could use the land if they clear it. They can use the land as long as

he does not need it yet.

The landless peasant women work for landlords either as tenants ("magsasaka") or as agricultural workers. The "magsasaka" (tenants) have a relatively permanent arrangement with the landlord, who may, however, arbitrarily decide to send them away. Under the tenancy system, the peasant women generally give to the landlord an average of 12-15 cavans of palay per harvest. The peasant women refer to this arrangement as "buwisan system", in which the harvest that goes to the landlord is considered as a land tax. At an average price of 175 pesos per cavan, the monetary value of 12-15 cavans is eqvivalent to 1,920 to 2,400 pesos per harvest. The women find this system of share-cropping burdensome. Under this "buwisan system", the women also shoulder all the cost of production. Since the peasants receive no government subsidy for farm production, the women usually borrow the money they need for production expenses through an informal credit system controlled by usurers who charge very high interest rates. Sometimes the landlord is also a usurer. Where the landlord is not a usurer the women borrow from rich families who reap considerable profit from this uncontrolled informal credit system. Some of these rich families are small rice traders in the community. For every 1,000 pesos that the usurers lend out, the peasant women pay back an average of 14 cavans of palay at harvest time. At 175 pesos per cavan of palay, 14 cavans of palay has a monetary

value of of 2,450 pesos, making the interest rate close to 150%. With the share that goes to the landlord and the harvest that goes to the usurer, what is left for the women is very minimal and is not even enough for their subsistence until the next harvest. If the landlord is also the usurer, which is often the case, then almost all of the harvest goes to the landlord. If nothing of the harvest is left after the landlord and usurer get their share, the women mortgage their next harvest and borrow money to meet their families daily basic need for food. The women who borrow from usurers who are rice traders usually do not receive a loan in cash but in kind - that is, the usurer-rice trader lends them out sacks of rice that he is not able to sell in the market because of poor quality. But when the women pay back in kind it is usually of better quality rice or palay because the usurer-trader would reject it if the quality is poor. So while the peasant women may produce a good quality harvest, they do not necessarily fully enjoy it. Not only are they therefore producing wealth for the landlord by their labor, but they also provide a captive market for rice rejected by the rich. Hence, it is through the structural making of the peasant women and men as landless producers and bonding them in debt that wealth and poverty is created in this feudal mode of production. The peasant women are poor because they (and the peasant men as well) are the exploited class in this system.

While the feudal system rests on exploitation, the

poverty it creates in turn perpetuates it. Exploitation needs poverty --it needs the poor to feed the system. Although most of the women feel their work only ends up "making the rich richer", and that they "only work to feed the rich", they continue working as tenants because usurers usually lend only to those they know have a land to till although they may not necessarily own such land. Usurers know that if the borrower has a land that she/he tills as tenant, he can be assured of production somehow some time. Usually the women try as much as possible to maintain a good credit record by paying back their debts immediately after harvest even if nothing is left for themselves. By keeping a good credit record they can be assured that the usurer will not reject them the next time they come to borrow. There are cases when the lenders themselves go to the field with empty sacks to make sure that they get their part of the harvest, because they know that the peasants also need the harvest and they would certainly keep something for themselves. By all means the peasants also will secure the needed expenses for production on the landlords' lands because if they are unable to produce on the land, they will be considered in default or negligent which will give the landlords a reason not to let them till the land anymore. Hence, contrary to the perceptions of a landlord in Calintaan that "the peasants are poor because they are lazy", the peasant women and their families in fact work very hard. But while their hard work enriches the landlords and the usurers,

it exploits them.[1]

In this dynamics of landlessness, debt bonding and poverty, what is not immediately visible is the gender factor. First, usually the borrowing of money through the informal credit system is relegated to the women since it is considered degrading. "I feel so small, degraded when I borrow money", says Ate Liya.[2] "No man has yet come here to talk about borrowing money, usually it is the women who borrow money for the needs of the family", observes Ate Gansa. There are a few exceptions when it is the husband who does the borrowing, such as in the case of Ate Su who relegates it to her husband because she said she is ashamed ("nahihiya") to do it. Hence, contrary to the perception of a male agriculturist in Mindoro, that borrowing is a customary habit ("nakapagsanayan") among the peasant women that is why they are always in debt, borrowing in fact becomes the peasant women's survival strategy they would rather not do if there is a better way. There is emotional struggle involve in doing this survival strategy: "When I need to borrow, I feel as though I must have strong will ("lakas loob")", says Ate Liya. There is also awareness among them that borrowing from usurers is exploitative. Ate Liya, for example, further narrated that the usurer, from whom she borrows her production costs, recently insisted that she pays him back 20 cavans of palay instead of the usual 15 cavans of palay per 1,000 pesos. She pleaded ("nagpakaawa") to him that she would not have that

much since even the seedlings for planting she did not have. But the usurer further insisted. This time Ate Liya told him:

> Squeeze, and squeeze me as much as you can, but there is nothing more that you can squeeze out from me. Because we are poor, you treat us as though we are not sisters and brothers ("magkakapatid") who should help each other ("magtulungan").

With these words, Ate Liya said the usurer kept quiet. But she feels that she does not want anymore to go back to him. Ate Liya theorizes from her experience that usurers benefit from the poverty of the poor: "There is no poor who does not borrow from the rich. The rich gets richer" Borrowing from usurers is not something that these women like doing because of "habit", it is a survival strategy imposed on them by the following: a) the situation of poverty and the place gender hierarchy puts them in this situation of poverty, b) their lack of access to alternative resources for their production expenses, c) the exploitative relations generated by the feudal village economy.

The second gender factor is that in government policies peasant women's productive role is still unrecognized. For instance, title to the land is placed under the husband's name because generally it is the man who is considered the peasant/farmer or head of the family, although peasant women do a considerable amount of farm work and take responsibility in meeting the needs of the family. Ate Beni, for example, who received two Land Transfer Certificates (CLT) from former President Marcos, one for less than a hectare of land and the

other for a little over one hectare, does not have her name included in the Certificates -- it is only her husband's name that appears on them.[3] The CLT was signed by President Marcos in 1983, but Ate Beni and her husband received it only in 1986. Ate Beni recalled that the technician, who gave them the Certificates, said that with the CLT they could now pay their land tax (in the form of harvest) to the Land Bank, because that would serve as their amortization for the land. If they continue paying their "buwis" to the landlord, it would not be counted as their amortization. But when they showed the CLT to their landlord, he did not believe them and disagreed to the terms of the CLT. The landlord told them that he was not informed by the Office of Marcos or Department of Agrarian Reform about the CLT. To make sure that the landlord gets the "buwis", he would already carry empty sacks to the fields and would gather the palay himself. So Ate Beni and her husband feel that the CLT is useless ("walang kuwenta"). Ate Beni's experience is one of the indications of the failure of land reform in Mindoro, as well as in other parts of the country. The program did not contain provisions for adequate support for the peasants to be able to acquire the lands which were designated for distribution, which included only rice and corn lands. Moreover, there was also no political support for the empowerment of the peasants as an organized class, since Marcos declared Martial Law at the same time that he announced in the media his land reform program. On top of this, the

land reform program made peasant women's significant contribution in production invisible -- as indicated by Ate Beni's experience of not having her name included in the CLT they received from the government.

Ate Beni is interested in having the possibility of the CLT terms implemented, because a CLT holder has more chance of being able to borrow money for production expenses from rural banks since they can use the Certificate for collateral. But not having her name on the CLT segregates the peasant woman from formal credit system, such as rural banks. That is why, usually it is the peasant men who deal with the formal credit system such as banks, while women deal usually with the informal credit system (usury) which is more exploitative. But although the peasant male goes to the Land Bank in Mindoro to borrow money, he is not always guaranteed to get a production loan. For example, Kuya Tonyo, a husband of one of the peasant women, was rejected by the Bank when he went there to borrow the production costs he estimated they needed in July 1989 planting season. A staff member of Mindoro Institute for Development also said that most banks in Mindoro do not anymore lend out production loans because it is risky. In November 1988 there was a big flood calamity in Mindoro that destroyed many crops, especially palay. As a result many peasants were yet unable to pay back their loans. With no access to formal credit sytems, poor peasants, like the women of KAMMI, have no other choice but to borrow their badly

needed production expenses from usurers.

The third gender factor is the sexual division of labor. The women usually do the planting, weeding, and harvesting which requires more bending and is more back-breaking than plowing the field, which is usually done by the men. Two male peasants I talked to while at the house of Ate Lory said that they would prefer not to do the planting because their "backs ache" when they do it. Weeding that is very tedious is usually done by the women. Weed-preventive chemicals, they sometimes use, do not kill all the weeds, especially small weeds. So the women have to remove these small weeds, which they find more tedious to remove than the bigger weeds. Often times the agro-chemicals that are used in the farm also stimulates weed growth, giving more work for the women. Household, reproductive work is also still largely relegated to the women in addition to farm work. For example, in my group interview of 14 peasant women, all of them raised their voices in unison that they do more work than the men because they take care both of the home ("bahay") and the farm ("bukid"), while the men take care of the farm only ("bukid lang").

Under the semi-feudal mode of production, not all the women of KAMMI work as tenants under the share-cropping system. Some of them work as agricultural wage workers, generally as seasonal workers not on permanent basis. This is generally, for example, the case of the women in Sablayan.

Instead of a share in the crop produced, they receive an average wage of 20-30 pesos a day, which is below subsistence level. Such wage is not even sufficient to buy a kilo of fish for the day which costs at least 36 pesos per kilo. Sometimes the women spend at least 4-6 pesos for transportation to go to the field which lessens their real wage.

Agricultural wage workers do not necessarily deal directly with the landlord who may own the land they work on. They deal directly with the tenant farmer who acts as the administrator of the landlord's land. In some cases this administrator-tenant farmer is a relative of the landlord who also gets a wage for his work.

Agricultural wage workers are in a more precarious position than tenants. They cannot be sure of being hired every planting and harvesting season. Ate Mely, for example, said that there were at least 60 women who wanted to work in the field where she was working, but the tenant-administrator took only half of them at the suggestion of the landlord. Often times agricultural wage workers end up as seasonal workers. Thus, their exploitation takes the form of not only providing cheap labor for those who own the land, but also in the form of making them into an expendable reserved labor force. By this role, the agricultural wage workers are made to maintain the semi-feudalist system which exploits them. The existence of this semi-feudal system demonstrates the fact that the penetration of capitalism (wage economy) in

agricultural development, did not entirely transform the feudal economy, but modified it in such a way that it would serve merchant capital. By paying the peasant men and women cheap wages, instead of a share in the crop they produce, the landlords could accumulate more commercial rice for sale in the capitalist market. As wage agricultural workers, the women now have to buy all their subsistence rice from the market -- thus, turning them into buyers of the rice that they produce. But because of inadequate wages, they are not always able to buy the rice they need. When they cannot secure money to buy their staple food, they usually eat "yuro", a kind of local delicacy. Ate Beni cooked some "yuro" for me, it tasted good, but quite heavy on the stomach. Ate Beni said, that there were some children in their village who were poisoned by eating "yuro", because it is a very delicate food, and it has to be prepared in the right way. It happened that time when there was nothing to eat in the village after the crops were destroyed by the flood and people could not also farm after military operations. Several women said that when people in the village begin eating "yuro", it means it is "tagkiriwi" -- the months of the year when peasants are most poor because they have already used up their share of the harvests, usually 3 to 4 months before the next harvest season. Agricultural wage workers, who have no permanent land to till, are most likely to get hungry during "tagkiriwi", because usurers would not usually lend to seasonal workers, unless they have a

guaranteed harvest they could mortgage in advance. Hence, the integration of the peasant women into the wage economy did not necessarily result to their economic improvement -- contradicting the assumption of the "integrationist perspective" on women and development.

There are tenant women, such as Ate Glin, who till their landlords'land under a share-cropping arrangement (feudal system) but since the amount of share they get is never adequate for their subsistence consumption, they hire themselves out as wage agricultural workers (semi-feudal system) for other landlords after they have worked on their landlords' land. It is here where the articulation of different modes of production is concretized in the experience of these peasant women. But it is in the articulation of these different modes of production that the peasant women and men are formed into an exploited class.

Turning tenants into agricultural wage workers, if not sending them off the land, seems to be a way by which big landlords try to circumvent the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program of the Aquino government. An administrator of a government official's landholdings in Calintaan, for example, mentioned that there were in fact tenants in his 400-hectare coconut plantation, but he sent them away. He said the official argues that he plans to distribute the land, but there are no tenants there to whom he can distribute the land. Today, the plantation is generally idle, and when there is

work to be done, the administrator (who is also by the way a relative of this government official) hires agricultural workers for specific tasks at 20 pesos per day. He praises the official for working so hard, that he did not grab lands, that his large landholdings is a result of his own hard work. In contrast, he blames the peasant for being poor because he thinks they are not working hard enough. On the other hand, some of the women complain that the official's farm animals had destroyed their vegetable plantations because they are made to roam the village loose. Vegetables are very important for peasant families in the village. Often times this is their only main course that goes with rice because they could hardly afford to buy fish or meat that the rich landlords can afford. When vegetables are not available the women and their families sometimes just eat rice and salt or sugar, and in this case it is the children who suffer most. Hence, in this situation, the women involved do not only produce "to let the rich eat" but also to feed the animals of the rich while unable to feed their own children.

Biological reproduction and social reproduction. The other way by which the peasant women are exploited in the feudalist/semi-feudalist mode of production is in their social reproductive role. Social reproduction refers to the process by which the system is maintained or reproduced so that it remains unchanged over time. This could involve the reproduction of the labor force that will work in the system,

or the social maintenance of the workers who already work in the system. The peasant women are made to play a role in the social reproduction of the feudalist/semi-feudalist system that makes them poor. Their children generally also work in the fields but their labor has no value. Often times the children of the peasant women also end up as landless peasants who work for the landlord or as agricultural wage workers. Ging and Lou of Calintaan, for instance, are teen-agers who have dropped out of school due to poverty and are now working on a landlord's land which their parents used to till. Ging and Lou aspire to have a higher education so that they will not anymore be degraded or exploited by the rich ("para hindi na kami alipustain ng mga mayayaman"). Under the present system, however, Ging and Lou are unlikely to experience upward mobility. Hence, one way to reproduce the feudalist system, that enriches those who own and control the land is to keep the peasantry where they are. One way to keep them where they are is to keep them poor. One way to keep them poor is to maintain a system that distributes wealth upward to a few rather than downward to the majority of the Filipino people. This is exactly what the feudalist or semi-feudalist system does. It keeps wealth circulating among a small landed class while that wealth is being produced by the empoverished peasantry. If 67% of all women in the Philippines belong to the peasant class, then a good bulk of that wealth is being produced by peasant women but it doesn't trickle down to them.

Under conditions of extreme poverty and where farm work is not available, some daughters of these peasant families work as domestic servants with very low pay. For example, Ate Won has a daughter who works as a domestic servant in a family within the same village. She gets paid for 300 pesos monthly, which is used for their family subsistence and to buy the medicines for the father who was sick. The family for which she works is not really wealthy, but modest enough to relegate domestic work to a paid servant since they have a regular waged work outside the village. Ate Fel's daughter also works as a domestic servant even at a much lower wage, 200 pesos per month. Thus, poor peasant families supply the low-paid, low-prestiged domestic reproductive work for non-peasants who do waged work outside the home. Through cheap domestic labor, poor peasant families shoulder the social maintenance of the labor force for wage work outside the home.

The peasant women also are made to reproduce and maintain the system that exploits them through their role in the unsubsidized social maintenance of the active labor force, the reserve labor force, and the elderly who once were active in the labor force. With the absence of adequate government subsidy on social services, welfare programs, support services for the care of children, social security for the elderly peasants, and with the absence of redistributive economic policies, the maintenance of the labor force is primarily left to the family. Since domestic work is primarily still

relegated to the women, the social maintenance of the labor force, which must be a state responsiblity, is therefore primarily relegated to the women. The following examples illustrate this. First, the women would do everything they can to feed their children. Other than work in the farm which does not bring them adequate means to support their families, they do other means of income while taking major responsibilities in performing necessary household work. These other means of income subsidize the basic needs farm work is unable to meet. Secondly, elderly peasants do not get social security benefits from the government, neither from their landlords. Their economic and emotional care are primarily taken by the women. Ate Delita for example, who does all the farm work because she is separated from her husband, takes care of her elderly mother who cannot anymore work in the farm. Thirdly, the women's contribution to farm work that is done in the premises of the household, such as preparing the meals that farm workers need in order to have the physical energy to work, is not given the work value it has. It is not considered farm-related work, and therefore not considered in distributing agricultural wage and in the distribution of produce in the share-cropping system. For example, Ate Lorena and Ate Su prepare early in the morning the meals for the farm and also help in farm work, but this is not considered in the allocation of the farm produce. The share is based on the work of one tenant worker, the husband. This situation shapes the

women's concept of work. Ate Su, for example, does not view what she does as work. When I asked her what her work is, she said "None" ("wala"). What she does is not considred by her as work, yet she works the whole day doing domestic work, like fetching water several times during the day and caring for her three young children (the eldest only two years old), in addition to her occasional work in the farm. She admits that although her husband sometimes helps in fetching water, she does more of it. When she helps in the farm she brings her children there and her grandmother, who still works in the fields, helps take care of the kids there. The lack of economic recognition of women's contribution in the farm that it deserves is a way to maintain both the feudalist mode of production and the patriarchal relations which can be exploited to perpetuate the feudalist system. While the feudalist/semi-feudalist modes of production generates inequality and propels the process of class formation that concentrates power and wealth on top of the social pyramid, it also exploits unequal gender relations and ideologies of gender roles. The view on reproductive work as separated from relations of productive work, implicit in this feudal/semi-feudal relations, justifies the way by which the reproductive roles of peasant women are exploited to reproduce the system. The privatization of reproductive work, that usually takes place in the domestic sphere, also obscures the rationale for a more adequate state's support for the poor peasants in the

village political economy, for its young and elderly.

Lack of Government Subsidy and Privatization of Food Production

The peasant women does not receive government subsidy for rice production, the staple food of the nation. One of the production needs they expect the government to subsidize is irrigation. Ate Ara, for example, says that if there is "subsidy" on irrigation from the government, their harvest might increase. Ate Gansa also thinks that if they can have second cropping, their production would improve. But since there is no irrigation in times when it is not rainy season, they cannot do a second cropping because they just have to wait for the rainy season. Although there is the NIA (National Irrigation Authority), a government agency that is supposed to provide irrigation, the peasant women say that they have not really benefitted from it.

The presence of the NIA in Mindoro has not significantly improved the irrigation system. For example, as of 1988, more than half of the total productive land areas of 5 municipalities (Calintaan, Magsaysay, Rizal, San Jose) were still unirrigated.[4]

The presence of the NIA in Mindoro did not turn out to be a genuine government subsidy for the production needs of poor peasants since NIA charges irrigation fees. This adds to the cost of production of tenants, even of small owner-

tillers of 1 to 2 hectares, if they get NIA irrigation. Ate Ara criticizes the NIA as even "charging for the rain" and that "even nature is already controlled by the government" because the NIA charges irrigation fees even if the water they channel to some fields comes from the river. Furthermore, she says that even if some peasants did not use the NIA irrigation water because they could get their own irrigation from a river adjacent to their farms (thus not incur more production expenses) the NIA would charge them irrigation fees as long as the water passes their fields.

The inadequacy in government subsidy for rice production, such as in irrigation, indicates privatization of food production as a development policy in agricultural production. Privatization of food production eliminates state subsidy and puts the state responsibility on production on the peasant women who shoulder the cost of production. Staple food production, which must be a state responsibility, is relegated primarily to the landless peasant women and men who are vulnerable for exploitation under a feudal relations of production. Hence, during natural calamities, that bring destruction to food crops and farm animals at no of fault of the peasants, they do not get any assistance from the government nor from the landlords to pay off their debts for the production expenses. Yet, both the landlords and the state policy-makers are part of the whole complex system of social relations of production that brings rice on their table. For

example, the peasant women were talking about the 1988 floody typhoon, the biggest flood they recently experienced in Mindoro, that brought great destruction to their crops. Although it was not their fault ("hindi naman namin kasalanan") the landlords and the money-lenders mortgaged their next harvest in addition to the usual amount of crop-share they turn in every harvest season. This way the landlords did not bear the loss from the natural calamity, and the usurers further tied them into bigger debts. The peasant women did not also receive any relief assistance from the government. Ate Gansa, for example, said that after the typhoon a social worker from the government came asking them what they would need to recover from the destruction, but they never came back to deliver the help he promised.

Hence, the privatization of and the absence of government subsidy on food production, along with the feudal relations of production, relegates public/state responsibility on rice (staple) food production to the peasant women (as well as the peasant men). It creates wealth for the landlords and money-lenders while it leads to their immiseration and impoverishment of their families. The peasant women are aware of their role in the creation of this wealth that does not trickle down to them. Ate Lalay, for instance, says: "Without us poor, there will be no rich people" (Kung wala tayong mahirap, wala namang mayayaman).

In this situation of immiseration, the children are also

made to bear the brunt of underdevelopment as they are not able to receive adequate food. I have observed, for example, that the meals of the 4-year old son of Ate Gansa often times consisted only of rice, water, and sugar or sometimes salt or dried fish. Sometimes the rice is cooked as "lugaw" (cooking rice for a long time with a lot of water until the rice grains expand and become soft).[5] Hence, in the absence of government subsidy on rice production, the state also denies the children of the peasant women the basic economic rights, such as adequate food. Yet, the children of peasant families also contribute to production, when at a certain age their parents ask them to help in farm work.

Commercialization of Rice and Traders' Monopoly Control of Rice Marketing

Other than the class position the peasant women occupy in the mode of production, the privatized and traders' monopoly control of the agricultural marketing of rice has also aggravated the poverty of the peasant women and their families. Private rice traders have become a power block in the rural and urban economy that enables them to control the procurement, pricing, and distribution of rice. Often times they market the rice that they procure from the local market not in the local market, but in the urban or non-rice-producing regions of the country where the price of rice is higher. Some of the peasant women in fact sighed about the fact that in the village where they are producing rice,

sometimes they can not buy the rice they need. The peasant women of a village in Calintaan, for example, mentioned that a local official who is a landlord-trader-usurer would not sell rice in the village although he has a store and people would go to him looking for rice to buy. Some of the women go to the urban area, such as San Jose, to buy rice. Going to these places sometimes could mean having to cross rivers which can be difficult during rainy season, and having to spend quite a good amount of money on transportation which they can instead already use for other basic needs.

The traders' ability to control the procurement of rice has been enhanced through the Quedan Financing Scheme.[6] The Quedan Financing Scheme was established nationally as a semi-government formal credit institution in 1978, but not directly controlled by the Philippine government. It has its own policy-making body which sets up its own policies without having to get approval from the President. Other than rice, Quedan has various financing program for various products, like sugar, cocoa, cotton, abaca, rami fiber -- all export crops. It has approximately 500 employees all over the country. Quendan funds are provided by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank loans, as such its policies are promotive of IMF conditions. In Mindoro, the purpose of the Quedan Financing Scheme is to provide financing needs of food processors and traders, and food market retailers. Quedan does not loan out to traders directly; loaning procedure is

coursed through banks such as the Planters Development Bank, Land Bank of the Philippines, Rizal Banking Corporations, United Mindoro Savings Bank, and Development Bank of the Philippines.

Large rice trader-millers have largely benefited from the Quedan funds more than farmers' groups. For example, in 1989 25 million pesos was loaned out to an individual rice trader-miller, 6.6 million pesos for 3 traders in San Jose, Mindoro, 5 million dollars for Valiant Corporation (the biggest private family trading corporation in Occidental Mindoro) in addition to 7 million pesos it acquired in the previous year, and 1 million pesos for a mayor in Occidental Mindoro. Whereas, money loaned out to farmers' groups in 1989 was only 180,000 pesos. On top of this, Quedan had already given 5 million pesos to banks in quarantee payments for the loans that the traders could not pay. The private rice traders'control of the Quedan funds have enabled them to buy rice at a higher price than the price set by National Food Authority.[7] By buying rice at higher price the traders had been able to monopolize the procurement of rice. This has undermined the role of the National Food Auhtority (NFA), which was primarily set to stabilize the price of rice by procuring rice at lower price. In turn the NFA distributes the procured rice to market retailers at a lower price with the expectation that they will sell rice with little mark up. This of course does not happen, and without police power on price control of rice, the

NFA in fact has not been able to stabilize the price of rice. Operating within a feudal-capitalist economy, the NFA basically follows the free market enterprise ideology where private investment has the dominant power in controling productive and market forces. It basically views the market economy resulting primarily from the law of supply and demand. In fact the NFA buys rice at lower price at harvest season and at higher price when it is not harvest season. Consequently, the peasants are not able to sell their produce to the NFA at a higher price when they have some produce to sell.

The peasant women are critical of the NFA. In their perspective, the NFA is more beneficial to the landlord-traders or to usurer-traders. Ate Bon, for example, mentioned that the usurer from whom she borrows production expenses and subsistence needs, has a rice mill and buys rice which he in turn sells to NFA. The NFA's official policy states that NFA may not procure rice from traders, but interviewed personnel in NFA admitted that there are "anomalies" in NFA, where traders are able to sell rice to NFA. In 1983, they discovered that some NFA employees accepted bribes from traders so that they would be given priority. The employees who accepted bribes were dismissed, but the practice of traders continues. NFA discovered landlord-traders are able to circumvent NFA policy by using the name of farmers who have no palay to sell. NFA personnel do not, however, view this as NFA's fault, because they say it is something they cannot "control", but

for which the traders'should be blamed since in their view "they are the ones cheating the NFA". Other peasants criticize, however, that if NFA is really serious about its policy, it must have the "will" to implement it. In my view, the NFA does not have the will to implement its policy because it is part of the government bureaucracy that implements development policies that are not truly promotive of the peasants' interests. NFA policies are also circumscribed within a free enterprise market relations and a feudal and semi-feudal relations of production, wherein landlords or usurers are able to expropriate surplus production from the peasants. Ate Delita also criticized that NFA does not buy rice from peasants who are not members of the Samahang Nayon, which is a government-controlled peasant organization.[8] So when they need cash, they cannot sell part of their harvest to the NFA but instead they just sell it to small local traders who buy it at a price lower than the NFA price. There is some truth to Ate Delita's criticism. Under NFA's policy of Institutionalized Procurement Program (IPP), NFA buys primarily from organized peasant groups and priority is given to Samahang Nayon, which is considered the legitimate peasant organization by the government. A farmers' group must be licensed by NFA to be able to sell rice or palay to NFA.

Some of the peasant women do not talk very well about the buying practices of some small traders to whom they sell some of their produce. Ate Beni, for example, suspects that she

had been cheated by a small trader in Calintaan. She suspects that this trader has tampered on the weighing scale he uses to weigh the produce being sold to him so he could gain more.

Whether the NFA is serious in its role in stabilizing the price of rice through direct procurement from the peasants is doubtful for several reasons. First, provisions of the NFA segregated the landless peasants who comprise majority of the peasantry in Mindoro. For instance, based on my interview, NFA considers the following as it legitimate source of procurement: a) the landowner, b) CLT holder, c) owner-tiller, b) leaseholder. All these categories comprise only a small section of the pesantry. Secondly, the NFA has not been able to procure enough rice because the government has not allocated enough funds for procurement. Funds usually lasts only for 4 to 5 days, in which case Mindoro NFA has to wait for funds from the NFA national office in Manila. There were instances it bought rice from the peasants but, it could not pay them immediately due to lack of funds. This led peasants to sell their harvest to small private rice traders who can pay them immediately. Previous to my field work, traders, especially the big traders, would buy rice at a price lower than NFA price, but at the time of my field work they were buying rice at higher price than the NFA price. For example, Valiant Corporation, the biggest rice trader in San Jose, Mindoro, was buying rice at 4.85 to 5.00 pesos per kilo while NFA was buying rice at 3.50 per kilo.[9] Buying rice at

a price higher than the price set by the NFA allowed the traders to increase the market price of rice, in a way more profitable for them since they now control almost 90% of the procurement of rice. But from the Valiant trader's view, the increase in the price of rice is due to the "law of supply and demand" and that by buying rice at higher price set by the NFA, they are "helping the peasants" without being cognizant of the impact of an increase in the price of rice to the poor peasantry. Secondly, at the same time that little funds are being funneled to the NFA, there is money availed to private traders by the Quedan Financing Scheme (QFS). Big rice miller-traders in Mindoro in fact have acquired the largest fundings from Quedan (Mindoro branch), entrenching further their economic power in the market. QFS, being funded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) whose development ideology is one that is promotive of the dominant role of private investment, has become a policy instrument to promote capitalist principles in the marketing of agricultural products. Thirdly, at the time that the private traders are gaining greater control of the marketing of rice, the government has lifted price control on agricultural products beginning August 1, 1989. In NFA personnel's view (whom I interviewed on July 6/89), NFA cannot compete with and is not supposed to compete with the private trader's control of commercial rice. The government has also divested the NFA of its authority in setting price control meaures on the price

of rice beginning October 1986.

The poverty of the peasant women is exacerbated by the fluctuations in the price of rice. The impact is not only economic, but also psychological. Ate Lorena, for example, with whose family I spent a couple of nights, could not sleep the day she learned that the price of rice has increased from 380 pesos per bag to 400 pesos per bag. At 4 o'clock in the morning, she woke up sighing about the increase in the price of rice: "You know, I was not able to sleep last night thinking that the price of rice has gone up to 400 pesos". The increasing price of rice has affected the poor peasant families adversely. It has increased their insecurity and hunger, while bringing wealth to the private traders who have gained control of rice marketing.

The value and the politics of rice. Rice, as the staple food in the Philippines, has a special value for the Filipinos. But for the village peasant women in Mindoro it has a particular value. Not only is it a staple food, without which the women and their families get hungry, but it has also an exchange value. In the village economy, it is used to barter fish or other basic needs when the women do not have cash to buy these needs. I observed this, for example, while I was in a village of Calintaan. One morning a woman carrying a basket on her head came over to the house of Ate Beni, where I slept the night before. She was selling different kinds of fishes that her husband had caught early in the morning. I

bought a bunch of fishes from her, and later she went around the village by foot to sell the other fishes. When she came back to Ate Beni's place after she sold all the fishes, I asked her how much money she got from her sales. She said that everyone gave her rice, that I was the only one who paid her with cash. With the value rice has in such village economy, it is not unlikely that when the peasant women do not have rice and cash one can expect hunger in their homes.

While for the village peasant women rice is as basic a human need, for certain people in the power structure rice is a political commodity. For a former director of the NFA, Emil Ong, who is related to President Aquino, rice is a symbol of corruption in the government.[10] During the administration of this director, approximately 45,000 tons of rice were missing from the NFA warehouse of Mindoro. In March 1988, there was an order from the regional director that these bags of rice should be shipped out of Mindoro but without an escort, although the standard operating procedure is that any shipment out of Mindoro should always be accompanied with an escort. Today, no one knows where these sacks of rice went, costing the government millions of dollars that are unaccounted for. It was alleged that the sacks rice sunk with the ship, but examinations tests showed no signs of such allegation. The case was publicized in the papers, and is now under investigation by a government agency, the Blue Senate Ribbon, created to look into cases of corruption in the government.

Emil Ong has been dismissed from his position in September or October 1988 as a result of this corruption.

For the government, rice is a commercial commodity that can boost up foreign exchange to pay Philippine foreign debt. While the peasant women experience scarcity of rice in their village economy where rice is being produced, Mindoro has been identified by the NFA as a "surplus area" in the production of rice. This means that Mindoro is one of the sources for export of rice. In 1983-1984, Mindoro participated in the export of rice to Malaysia through the NFA. Also in 1989, Mindoro gave its share through the NFA in the shipment of rice to Malaysia as payment for Philippine loans. As a "surplus area", the government requires that Mindoro, through the NFA, contribute every five years to the export rice stock in the NFA main office in Manila. While the peasant women are made into consumers of poor quality rice (as I have discussed earlier), only the best rice in Mindoro is allocated for export. There is awareness among some of the peasant women about the relationship of their poverty and the exportation of rice and other products. Ate Gansa, for example, answered this way when I asked in a group interview the reasons for their being poor:

> Because our rice and other products are being sent to other countries ("Kasi yong bigas at producto natin ay pinapadala sa ibang bansa").[11]

Categorized as a "surplus area", Mindoro also supplies other regions of the Philippines, especially to non-rice

producing areas, such as Manila, Batangas, Coron, Cullion Leper Colony, Lucena, Albay, Romblon.[12] While the peasant women complained that their share in the harvest is not even adequate to meet their subsistence needs until the next harvest, more than 60% of rice production in Occidental Mindoro goes out of the province.[13] From 1983 to 1988 Occidental Mindoro had a total production of 15,162,502 m.t. of palay (an average of 2,527,083.667 m.t. of palay per year), but the peasant women did not get a fair share of the benefits of this production.[14] Ate Loray, who is a tenant in a crop-sharing arrangement and shoulders all the cost of production, has an explanation why this is so:

> Because our land tax to the landlord is very high, only very little harvest is left for us; and we can sell our rice only at a very low price. The ones who get rich are those who own the lands ("may-lupa") and the usurers ("nagpapautang").

If most of the peasant women and their husbands shoulder the costs of production in addition to their labor in the farm owned by landlords who do not till the land, then they are, in fact, the ones, not the landlords and the usurers, who are sigficantly contributing to this total production in Mindoro. By their productive and reproductive roles, women are doubly contributing to this total production. In a sense, although the peasant women experience inadequate food supply for themselves and their families, especially during the months of "tagkiriwi" (usually from June through September when the share from their harvest is already consumed), they (and other

peasants as well) are in fact feeding the nation and other foreign countries where the Philippines exports rice. In fact, while the peasant women were experiencing "tagkiriwi" during my fieldwork, I saw lots of rice stocks in Valiant's warehouse, a big private trader in San Jose and in Labrador's stockhouse, a small private trader in Calintaan. Hence, the months of "tagkiriwi", experienced by the peasant women of KAMMI, is not a natural cycle created by the seasons or cycle of harvest, but is a social situation created by the complex, though not immediately visible, interaction of various factors. These interlocking factors include the landlord system of landownership, the peasants' lack of control over their produce, the expropriation of rice and other resources out of Mindoro and out of the Philippines, and the position of the peasants in the power structure in the relations of production and the market.

The scarcity of rice in the village, that the peasant women were talking about, is politically and socially constructed -- an artificial scarcity that results from the politics of rice. NFA accounted that of the total rice production in Mindoro from 1980 to 1987 (22,775,653 m.t. of rice), 61% (13,891,291 m.t. of rice) were "surplus".[15] If indeed there is surplus, then this surplus was not an indication of abundance in Mindoro, but that this surplus was created through the exploitation of the landless peasant women and men, with peasant women particularly being exploited in

their productive and reproductive roles. That Mindoro is categorized by the NFA as "surplus" region needs to be re-assessed given the long-standing poverty situation of the peasant women and men and the frequently inadequate rice supply they experience all year through. During the months of "tagkiriwi" (June to August, when the peasant women are most poor because their share of the harvest are gone), within the period of 1983-1984 NFA had an average stock of 891,684.67 m.t. of rice in Mindoro.[16]

For the U.S. economy, the Philippine market provides an outlet for U.S. rice the quality of which is not viable in the U.S. local market. The Philippine media reported that the rice imported recently from the U.S. were not of quality good for human consumption. For the agribusiness transnational corporations, rice production provides a market for their agro-chemical products. Seen within the context of the global political economy, rice, the produce of the peasant women, men, and children and staple food of the Filipinos, acquire a far greater political significance. This brings us to the other power structure into which the peasant women's lives are enmeshed - economic imperialism.

Economic Imperialism and the Peasant Women's Lives

The village peasant women's lives, remote they may seem from the rest of the world, actually is also tied to the power structure in the world political economy. Economic imperialism

is a power phenomenon that has affected the development and underdevelopment of Philippine political economy. By economic imperialism I refer to the process by which the political economy of a developing nation is subjected to external control by an advanced industrial nation or group of nations. The Philippines, whose colonial and neo-colonial history continues to impact on its present political economy, is a Third World nation whose people feel the brunt of economic imperialism. While the Filipino ruling class and the corporate class of the First World may have benefited from economic imperialism, the poor majority of the Filipinos have been exploited in the process. The forces of economic imperialism that directly affect the peasant women are the Green Revolution and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). I discuss these in the following.

The Green Revolution. The Green Revolution brought the dynamics of economic imperialism in Philippine agricultural development closer to the lives of the peasant women. A western-conceived approach to agricultural development in the Third World, the Green Revolution was pioneered in the Philippines by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundation. It was officially launched in 1960 with the establishment of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) (funded largely by Rockefeller and Ford Foundation), whose research has been largely promotive of the interests of transnational corporations.

The Green Revolution followed an ideology that was based on the Modernization perspective, rather than redistributive approach to agricultural development. It gave a major role to transnational agribusiness corporations in modernizing agriculture. Modernization of agriculture was essentially thought of as increasing production through the use of western technology, such as agro-chemicals and farm machineries.

One of the major changes that Green Revolution brought in rice production was the replacement of the local rice hybrid with the foreign high-yielding varieties (HYV). The introduction of the foreign HYV was done at different periods at different parts of the country. In Mindoro, the peasant women got introduced into the use of the HYV in the early 1970's. Ate Morina recalls how the YHV was introduced to them:

> In 1972 or 1973, IRRI gave a seminar here. They told us that the new hybrid ("bagong binhi") yields more within three months. But we did not know that it would yield more only if you use a lot of fertilizers and pesticides.

In the 1960's Ate Morina recalled that there were still some traditional (local) hybrid that were being grown in Mindoro. But with IRRI's introduction of the HYV, the seed supply for the traditional local hybrid slowly disappeared and that the peasants were forced ("napilitan") to use the foreign hybrid because "NFA would not buy the traditional rice". Hence, IRRI's replacement of the local rice hybrid has government legitimation although, the peasant women say that they prefer the traditional variety because it "doesn't need

pesticides and fertilizers". Ate Lorena perceives the role of the government in the introduction of the foreign HYV:

> This is what the government did, it ordered that the traditional rice variety should be all removed, and use the variety that comes from outside the Philippines.

Ate Morina further asserted that the replacement of the local hybrid was actually "forced" ("sapilitan") because the government actually eliminated its seeds from the market. Given this situation, the peasants had no choice but to shift to the HYV because they could no longer find the local variety as seedlings for their planting. Some peasant women also mentioned that technicians of the HYV told them that the foreign hybrid was more resistant to typhoons, but later they (the peasants) discovered that the local traditional hybrid was in fact more resistant to typhoons than the foreign hybrid.

In contrast to the local hybrid, HYV are highly dependent on agro-chemicals, such as fertilizers and pesticides. From the experience of the peasant women, HYV do not yield good harvest unless it uses a heavy amount of these agro-chemicals. The introduction of the HYV was part of the Marcos government's Masagana 99 Program, a development package that contained provisions for the introduction of HYV and credit to the peasants along with the adoption of the variety. Ate Lorena explained their experience with the introduction of HYV and credit:

> The change in the rice seed, that is dependent ("angkop") on pesticides and fertilizers, is costly ("magastos").

> What we get is just enough for paying our debts, sometimes it is even inadequate ("kulang pa") to pay for all our debts. If there is no fertilizer and pesticides, there is no harvest. The credit of the government included pesticides and fertilizers. Even if you did not finish using all of them, you still had to pay. Until today this is the case.

Given this development package, Ate Morina sees the connection bewteen the introduction of the HYV, its agro-chemical dependency, and the interest of the transnational corporations:

> These pesticides and fertilizers that are needed with the production of HYV, is there so that foreign transnational corporations ("ang mga dayuhang korporasyon") can market their products ("para makabinta ng kanilang mga produkto").[17]

According to the peasant women the cost of rice production has increased since they began using the HYV. Production expenses is one of the burdens that most of the peasant women have to shoulder every planting season especially if they are tenants under the "buwisan system". Increase in the cost of rice production, for example, was the beginning of their getting into debt bondage in order to produce. Ate Lorena, for example, considers the high cost of production one of the major problems they have as peasants. She says that every planting season they have to borrow money at usurious rates to meet the cost of production.

The use of agri-chemicals also caused ecological damage to the land. The land has become naturally impotent that it would not yield good produce without the use of chemicals. The women have observed that the soil becomes infertile ("inutil")

after a long period that they have applied fertilizers on it. So that in times when the peasants are unable to afford the cost of fertilizers and pesticides harvest is poor. With poor harvest very little, if nothing, is left for the peasants, but there is always harvest left for the landlords.

The ecological system that provide other food sources for the peasants have also been damaged by the use of agri-chemicals. The peasant women claim that in Mindoro edible frogs, fishes that thrive on the rice fields would be found dead after they apply pesticides or fertilizers. Now seldom would they find those fishes they would usually catch before the use of these agro-chemicals.

The ecological balance has also been damaged. According to an agriculturist in Mindoro, since the land has been saturated with agro-chemicals the growth of certain weeds that provided natural nutrients for the soil when they dried up are now stunted. Instead of promoting the use of these organic fertilizers the Green Revolution promoted the use of agro-chemicals since this would be profitable for the multinational corporations that produce and market these products. Some peasants have also observed that some pesticides led to the growth of more pests ("mas nakakadami sa mga peste"). This supports what I have learned in my research when I worked as a researcher in 1979 at the Farmers Assistance Board, a non-governmental support institution for peasants -- that pests develop resistance to pesticides, and when this happens there

usually occurs a widespread outbreak of pests.

Other than the ecological effects, the use of agro-chemicals have also affected the peasants' health. Some of the women said that they usually get dizzy when they smell the pesticides sprayed in the field and gets into the air they breathe. A thirteen year-old grandson of Ate Morina was hospitalized for almost a month because of over-exposure from the pesticides that he used to spray in the field. Some women whose hands are more exposed to the fertilized soil complained of skin blemishes and sensitive areas in their hands and they attribute this to exposure to the fertilizers they sow on the fields. Ate Morina, for example, has observed the effect of fertilizers on her hands:

> My hands feel sensitive ("mahapdi"). My finger tips have become thin, that sometimes they easily bleed and my nails sometimes break ("napupudpod"). That is why sometimes I cannot do certain things, like holding or touching salt ("asin").

Thus, the Green Revolution, as an outgrowth of the penetration of transnational capitalism in rice production had negative impact on the lives of the peasant women of KAMMI. Although it increased rice productivity, it failed to bring the peasant women out of their poverty and their debt bondage. It failed not only because it increased the cost of production, which most of the women shoulder, but more importantly because it was introduced without addressing the basic structures that make the peasant women and men, and the majority of the Filipinos poor. As a development package

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Given this development package, Ate Morina sees the connection bewteen the introduction of the HYV, its agro-chemical dependency, and the interest of the transnational corporations:

> These pesticides and fertilizers that are needed with the production of HYV, is there so that foreign transnational corporations ("ang mga dayuhang korporasyon") can market their products ("para makabinta ng kanilang mga produkto").[17]

According to the peasant women the cost of rice production has increased since they began using the HYV. Production expenses is one of the burdens that most of the peasant women have to shoulder every planting season especially if they are tenants under the "buwisan system". Increase in the cost of rice production, for example, was the beginning of their getting into debt bondage in order to produce. Ate Lorena, for example, considers the high cost of production one of the major problems they have as peasants. She says that every planting season they have to borrow money at usurious rates to meet the cost of production.

The use of agri-chemicals also caused ecological damage to the land. The land has become naturally impotent that it would not yield good produce without the use of chemicals. The women have observed that the soil becomes infertile

based on Modernization, it did not respond to the needs of the poor and landless peasant men and women because its formulation did not begin from their perspective and human needs. It is a technocratic, top-down approach to development, that begins from and ends at a foreign externally-determined perspective on agricultural development. It can not address the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines because it is controlled by the power holders who benefit from this politics of underdevelopment and exploitation.

The IMF and Philippine debt trap. The IMF (International Monetary Fund) through the conditions it puts on its granting of loans to developing nations has been able to exert significant external influence in the nature of development of Philippine political economy. Recently, in March 1989, the Aquino government submitted the Letter of Intent (LOI) to the IMF in relation to the granting of IMF loan of $1.3 billion. In this LOI the Aquino government has further entrenched the control of the IMF on development policies in the Philippines. The LOI contains provisions that reflect the conditions the IMF puts on the Philippines. Some of these provisions are: Devaluation, import liberalization, import-intensive investment (along with subcontracting jobs, wage regionalization scheme, labor control), tax increase, privatization program (involves the selling of government-controlled or government-owned corporations to the private

business sector), lessening restrictions on banks' interest rates. Some of the over-all effects of these conditions that are directly felt by the peasant women and their families are: increase in the prices of goods and services, and decrease in real wage and income, increase in the cost of production, increase in interest rates. Other over-all effects on the larger Philippine political economy these conditions can bring are: increasing unemployment, further increase of the foreign debt, increased dependency on foreign loans which entrenches external control of Philippine development and puts the country into a debt trap. Just as the Green Revolution has put the peasant women to greater debt bondage, the IMF has brought the whole Philippine political economy deeper into a debt trap. Ate Celiza sees the connection between their everyday lives and the increasing Philippine foreign debt. She said during their leadership training when they were discussing the foreign debt issue: "We are paying for this debt indirectly when we buy goods with increased prices". She questions why this is so when the government knows that they "do not even have yet a job". Ate Lorena added that "the price of soap had already increased from 9.50 pesos to 11.50 pesos". She has also observed that even "the fees for residence certificate has increased from 3 pesos, to five pesos, then now to 10 pesos". She also noticed that fees for church services have also increased: "Even the fees for baptism has increased". The peasant women are usually the first to notice the increase

in prices and feel its impact since they are the ones who go to the market to buy the daily needs of their families. Ate Bon, for example, came home one morning from the market sighing about her discovery that the price of rice had already increased and spread her discovery to Ate Lorena, to me, and the other women in the neighborhood.

The U.S. in the IMF. Having the highest voting power, the U.S. has a dominant control in the IMF. Most policies of the IMF and the conditions it places on the borrowing country are those which will protect the interest of the multinational corporations. Far from being neutral, IMF's ideology of development is one that is promotive of capitalist development or growth ideology. It is not promotive of re-distributive policies that may cut down profits for multinational corporations, promote labor empowerment, or radical re-structuring of the political economy that will change unequal power structures. The control of the IMF in Philippine development cannot be facilitated without the creation of a ruling elite that perpetuates its power by aligning itself with foreign interest. The U.S. has played a role in intervening in Philippine political affairs to consolidate this ruling class that will continue to protect U.S. interest against the growing tide of Filipino nationalism. The connection between the U.S. and the IMF in the Philippine politics of underdevelopment links the everyday lives of the peasant women to U.S. imperialism which has been perpetrated

under its existing neo-colonial relationship with the Philippines.

The Politics of Repression and the Peasant Women's Lives

The interlocking power structures that I have discussed above into which the peasant women's lives are enmeshed, resulting to their poverty and exploitation, are forcibly and violently tied together by repression. By repression I refer to the processes by which the state prevents radical change of the existing power relations that largely benefit those with political and economic power. Poverty and exploitations create the pre-conditions for resistance and rebellion. To maintain these power structures it is not enough to rely simply on the logic of capitalist development, or simply by putting up a landlord-dominated Congress. The state resorts to repression and militarization to contain resistance against the status quo, especially when there is organized grassroot resistance that seek to alter these exploitative structures. Even with the ascendancy of President Corazon Aquino that toppled the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, militarization continues to be part of the politics of ruling. In fact, the peasant women I talked to experienced militarization directly under the Aquino government. In this section I will examine the politics of repression as it is taking place in the Philippines and its impact on the peasant women.

The politics of repression: A view from the field. The

politics of repression in the Philippines has taken the form of Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), a systematic counter-insurgency strategy that is fought on different levels -- on the ideological, social-psychological, political and military levels. On the ideological level, the Philippine government has articulated the "anti-communist ideology" which assumes that the national security of the nation must be defended from communist infiltrations. "Anti-communist ideology" is propagated through the media which is largely under the control of government. Media coverage is also selective to prevent the people's awareness of social problems and consequently their resistance to them. For example, the two mass demonstrations that I attended in Manila as part of my fieldwork were not reported in the media. The people's demands in these demonstrations included: a) genuine land reform as opposed to Aquino government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law which the peasants criticized as biased to the interest of the landlords, b) removal of the U.S. bases in the Philippines and an end to U.S. interventionism in the Philippines, c) resistance against the IMF's control of economic policies in the Philippines, d) de-militarization and democratization, e) promotion of workers' and church people's rights and, f) emancipation of Filipino women. Since these demands are radical, one way to contain them is to exclude them from the mainstream media coverage.

On the social-psychological level, Low Intensity Conflict

is waged by labelling people's organizations as "communist organizations". The government also uses the media to label these organizations. This labelling discredits these organizations as legal organizations and people are warned not to join them. It is a way to undermine the mass mobilization capacity of these organizations. People who are just beginning to join political organizations generally would not want to be associated with organizations the government has red-baited because of fear. Undermining legal organizations that work aboveground is a way to repress open mass protest that can have wider impact on the populace.

On the political level, low intensity conflict is waged through the consolidation of a ruling class that will adapt militaristic and exclusionary policies that will block radical transformation of Philippine political economy. Exclusionary policies this ruling class adapts includes defining which political parties are considered legitimate. It keeps the traditional two-party system, the Nationalista Party and the Liberal Party, comprising largely of the traditional politicians who really have no radical alternative to the present development in the Philippines. This two-party system is a legacy of U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines, similar to the two-party system in the U.S., with the Nationalista Party (NP) as the counterpart of the Republican Party and the Liberal Party (LP) as the counterpart of the Democratic Party. During the Marcos regime, the NP was changed to KBL and the

LP was changed to LABAN. The change however, was only in name since there was no significant change in the basic development ideologies they spouse. Both of these parties are exclusionary of the National Democratic Front as a viable political party that offers an alternative development for the Philippines. Both parties support the containment of the New People's Army, the revolutionary army of the National Democratic Front. The U.S. government's political interventionism in the Philippines is directed towards the support of these two traditional political parties that offer no transformative policies on the nature of Philippine development.

The other political strategy of Low Intensity Conflict to contain a radical transformation of Philippine economy is the creation of a "Third Force" (Bello 1987), moderates who will promote palliatives to Philippine problems while keeping in tact the existing power structure. Some of these reforms include civic action projects that are coursed through the military as a way to create a benevolent image of the military while militarization is going on. Other reforms may include reforming the military or the creation of a human rights commission while keeping military units in the rural areas undismantled.

The military strategy that Low Intensity Conflict uses to repress transformative change in Philippine political economy is the use of paramilitary troops or "vigilantes" in the rural and urban areas. Created under the Marcos regime

and continued, intensified under the Aguino government, these vigilantes are paramilitary forces whose aim is to destroy groups and execute people who they suspect are communists or supporters of the New People's Army. According to the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates report, as of February 1988, there has been approximately 224 vigilante groups spread out all over the country. Its overall aim is to paralyze all forms of political, economic, and ideological support for the revolutionary movement in the Philippines. Other than military violence, paramilitary troops also use black propaganda to discredit revolutionary forces, like the New People's Army, as a form of social-psychological and ideological strategy of counter-insurgency. For example, Ate Morina's son-in-law, Kuya Tito, said while we were having supper in her house:

> The government does big propaganda here. These CAFGUS (referring to paramilitary troops), they are thieves. They will steal and afterwards they will let it come out that it is the NPA who did it. Like the cooperative of KMP, they ransacked it and got everything there. Afterwards they said that it was the New People's Army who did it. That is the propaganda of the government. Before it was the MATASADEM (Citizens Loyal To Democracy).... what democracy?...then Alsa Masa..."Alsa Bulsa" (grinning sarcastically while saying this). ["Alsa Bulsa" is a term synonymous with pickpocketing]. Now we have CAFGUS, but it is the same people. [Kuya Tito refers here to the paramilitary troops, often referred to as the "CAFGUS" in the village].

Recently under the Aquino administration, the paramilitary troops have been formalized into the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU). Members of the CAFGU are recruited from the local population. Some people in

Mindoro say the CAFGUs are the same as the former armed vigilantes, like the Alsa Masa, except that at its inception, the members did not wear military uniforms and now they do.

People who joined the CAFGU joined for various reasons. According to some people in Mindoro, enticements to join the CAFGU includes promise of economic benefits such as a monthly allowance, free uniforms, and paid expenses for the family of CAFGU members who die in combat or military operations. There is also the fear among local population that if they are recruited to join the CAFGU and they refuse they will become suspects of the military. Some of them are very young, mostly coming from poor rural families. There were those who joined the CAFGU who later discretely left when they later found out that the economic benefits they expected were not there.

CAFGU members are usually given training before deployment. Tonio, a male peasant relative of Ate Beni, who was arrested by the miltary in 1987 because of his political involvement was made to train CAFGU recruits as a psychological strategy to strip him of his political ideologies and worldviews. This was a way to use/manipulate him against the very movement he supported -- a form of ideological strategy of counter-insurgency.

CAFGU forces are highly visible when they roam around the villages because of their green military uniforms. Usually they go together in a unit of 10 or more. While in a village of Mindoro, I happen to meet a unit of 9 CAFGU combatants then

walking in the unpaved street at about 6:45 in the morning, pointing their guns as if ready to shoot. While they did not do anything to me, I was terribly afraid that they would stop me if they suspect that I was not really from the village. I was carrying a camera in my hand and I was glad that they did not notice it because I wrapped it with plastic. I pretended I was a member of the village community by not showing I was afraid of what they could possibly do to me and by continuing to walk seemingly unperturbed toward my destination. Some of the village people quietly looked as they paraded in the street with their guns held at a shooting position. Later, in the morning I learned that they dropped by the house of Ate Beni, where I slept the night before. They had breakfast there and later went to an inner village community because they said "they had a mission". This peasant woman who provided them with breakfast mentioned that sometimes they run short of food because sometimes she has also to feed soldiers other than the many people and relatives who come to her house. This woman has ten children to feed. Peasant women therefore are also made to contribute to the social maintenance of the military force that represses them and others in the community. Their hard-earned meager resources are therefore diverted from full subsistence use of their families to military maintenance which in the first place have not in any way benefited them. The story of Ate Bering, an evacuee from an inner village, further illustrates

this reality:

> It was about 4 o'clock in the morning, just when I was just falling into sound sleep because I was very tired that day, that the CAFGUs came. They made noises at my door. They entered my house. They made noise with my casserole. I asked them what they wanted. They said they have not yet eaten and that they wanted to eat. I told them then, oh, then I will cook, that only. They were many. After they ate, when they were about to leave, they took my chickens ("manok"), milk and sugar. They even took the belt I use to tie around my carabao's neck ("yong pangtali ko sa leeg ng kalabaw") because they said they could use it to carry bullets around their waist.

While the peasant women are made to contribute to the social maintenance of the CAFGUs from their meagre resources, big landlords in Mindoro have been able to use these paramilitary units to protect their control of land and its resources. Ate Bering further recounts:

> (G. . .) says that he does not use the CAFGUs. But he did. Before the military operation was conducted in our place, according to a tenant who was working on his land, he told the CAFGUs that if they enter his land he would give them lands to till. When military operations were conducted the people began evacuating from the village and some of his tenants could no longer work on his land. Now, it is CAFGUs who are working on those lands.

Some other people in Mindoro also talked about a certain big landlord, whose landholdings are protected by CAFGUs. They said CAFGUs protecting his lands have killed peasants who happen to step into his property. At another instance, in San Jose, a big landlord provides a headquarter for the CAFGUs where they could rest, sleep and eat. I have seen this headquarter myself.

There are also cases when the CAFGUS intervene in local village elections to undermine local officials they suspect

are supportive of the revolutionary forces. Ate Beni said that in their village, the predecessor of the present barrio captain (at the time of my fieldwork) was undermined by the CAFGUS because they suspect she supports the New People's Army. She recalled:

> Although the village people like her, the CAFGUS told us that if we vote for her and she wins in the election, our houses will be reduced to makeshifts ("kubo-kubo"). Of course the people got afraid, so the former captain was not re-elected.

In its anti-communist crusade and in its goal to wipe out all forms of support to the revolutionary forces in the rural areas, the military also stereotypes the enemy to identify its suspects whom they can arrest, interrogate with torture, harass or "salvage" (a colloqial term for extra-judicial executions). In Mindoro the stereotypes for a suspect are: a) He/She is a new face in the village; nobody in the community knows him/her; b) She/He uses "Ka" (address of respect to elders) to address people in the village; c) She/He uses the word "feudalism"; d) She often carries a knapsack and often wears jeans; e) She/He speaks pure tagalog; f) He/She refuses to give food or animals to the soldiers when they asked for them; g) He is a member of KMP; h) He refuses to join the CAFGU when recruited; i) He/She refuses to appear when summoned by the military for interrogation; j) He/She is a leader of a non-governmental organization. An incident where this stereotyping was applied resulted to the "salvaging" of the suspect by a CAFGU member. Ate Gansa

recalls:

> There was one person who came to this place. He did not know anybody here. He happen to set into the house of the CAFGU member who is this community. He help them in farming. But after they made use of him, the CAFGU killed him because he said no one in the community knew him. It was in the middle of the night, we heard him shout, "Have pity on me! Do not kill me, have pity on me, I do not have any offense!". His pleading remained unheeded, we heard the shooting of a gun. In the morning we saw his dead body near the stream there. That is why do not go to that area there, there is an informer there.

Stereotyping the enemy as a way to identify suspects has resulted in many human rights violations and indiscriminate counter-insurgency killings and massacre. That is why politicized people now call this Low Intensity Conflict "total war".

Militarization has made the lives of the peasant women more difficult. It has badly affected their family, their economic, political and community lives.

Impact of militarization on the peasant families. The peasant women and their families feel the impact of militarization in their family life. It has separated members of the family. Some of the husbands of the peasant women are out of the village and could not come back because the military had harassed them. They escaped from the village when the military raided their homes, as part of the systematic harassment the military conducted in 1987 against non-governmental peasant organizations in Occidental Mindoro. The following story of Ate Gansa is a typical example.

In the early part of 1988 about several soldiers raided

the house of Gansa's family. Only their son, Mario (12 years old at that time), Josie (their 8 year-old daughter at that time), Jojo (her 3-year old son at that time), and Teka (a relative of Ate Gansa) were in the house. The soldiers with guns in their hands, asked the children where their father was. One of the soldiers poked Mario's chest with a gun to pressure him to bring them to where his father was. Teka was horrified when she saw this:

> When I saw them poked him ("binugbog nila siya"), I felt as if my chest would open up. Because of fear I was able to climb up the roof, and the soldiers pointed their guns at me asking where Luis was.

The soldiers also wanted to take small Jojo out of the house and take him with them. Josie cried and beg the soldiers not to take away his brother: "Please don't take him because I will have no more companion here". A relative of the family who knew what was happenning immediately notified Ate Gansa and her husband not to go home to their house since it was being surrounded by the soldiers. Ate Gansa and her husband had to go somewhere. They went out of the village while their children remained under the care of relatives. After some months Ate Gansa risked coming home to the village since she missed her children very much. But her husband is still unable to come home to the village since they still consider it too risky for him. Meanwhile, Ate Gansa is the sole support of the family for her husband has been unable to find work while outside the village. Ate Gansa feels that this situation has made her life very difficult:

> You know, Gaya, I want my husband to be able to come back here because I am already finding it so difficult. He cannot work ... my daughter who is with him is sick and has no work. I send both of them money for their support.

Ate Gansa's experience of military repression has such an emotional impact on her. She cries every time she would tell her story. She is also still bearing the pain of knowing that Mario up to this time still feels pain in his chest at which the soldier poked a gun. She says her 3 year-old son would often cry, and sometimes wake up at night crying since her husband left the village. Every time he sees a soldier, this 3-year old son would often say, "Nanay, ayan ang mga sundalo, hinahanap nila si Tatay" (Mommy, there are the soldiers, they are searching for Daddy). Hence, when a family experiences atrocities from the military, its impact is not only felt by adults, but also by children who get deprived of normal family life and who concretely experience violence very early in their lives. The emotional and psychological impact of such experience on children can have social repercussions in the future.

A similar experience has been told by Ate Morina. The first time I visited her she immediately showed me her husband's picture. He has been out of the village since 1987 to escape from a group of soldiers who raided their house looking for him. Her husband was a well-known active leader of KMP-Mindoro (Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas - Peasant Movement of the Philippines, Mindoro chapter). The military

has placed a price on his head. So it is too risky for him to come back to the village. Ate Morina lives with her married daughter, Lita, who also has a price on her head, so she cannot go out of the house alone. At the close of the day, just when the sun begins to set, they would close all windows and doors. This at least gives them a sense of security: "You know, I have developed a phobia; closing doors and windows early... it is better to take precautions".

In another village, Ate Yanita talked about a gang of soldiers surrounding her house in July 1989. Her house was under surveillance night and day because the soldiers suspect there is a member of the NPA who goes into her house. She was concerned of the children in the neighborhood getting frightened because the soldiers would position their guns as if ready to shoot. Ate Yanita also had an encounter with the military in 1987. She and other families came down from their village because of military operation. The military announced her name in the radio as a commander of the New People's Army and that she had surrendered. Ate Yanita laughed at this. She recalled the occasion when she and the other neighbors, approximately 30 of them, who evacuated from the village and the military brought them to the military detachment in a military truck. They were told to sign a piece of paper that they were guerilla surrenderees. None of them signed and refused the label "NPA surrenderees" and denied that they were what the military wanted to claim they were.

Another peasant woman, Ate Lorena, spoke about her 49-year old brother who was arrested, jailed and tortured by the military on September 5, 1988:

> For 16 days the soldiers blind-folded him, then covered his head with a helmet, and when they removed the blind-fold, he could not see and his eyes became extremely sensitive to light for some time. They tied him and kicked him. The soldiers struck him on his chest and broke two of his ribs. Today he still feels the pain, cannot breathe well when working in the fields, and cannot do certain tasks because of it. The doctor said that he cannot anymore do heavy work.

When he was in jail Ate Lorena made sure that the soldiers knew that her family was aware that they (the soldiers) were keeping his brother. Ate Lorena said that at first the soldiers denied that they knew the whereabouts of her brother. But Ate Lorena did not give up insisting that she knew that they had her brother detained. Finally, the soldiers agreed that they could have her brother out of jail if they could put up a certain amount of money. Ate Lorena and her family raised thousands of pesos by borrowing here and there, just to be able to take her brother out of jail.

> We spent more than 9,000 pesos all in all doing everything to take our brother out of jail, like expenses in transportation to get information about our brother. We gave the military 4,000 pesos cash so they can return our brother to us. He was the first one in our village to be picked up by the MATASADEM [paramilitary troops]. They had the plan to kill my brother after 3 days in order to make him a sample to the people for what could happen to them if they are suspected. We just paid for his life.

While Ate Lorena says that this experience put her and her other sisters in debt, she recalled that the soldiers "had a whole night of drinking spree" after they gave them the money.

Militarization has also disturbed the normal conditions for family life of peasant families. Military bombings and military operations have led peasant families to evacuate from the inner villages. Ate Gansa and Teka talked about a mass evacuation of people from the village of Malpalon in 1988. Young children and old people had to walk many miles with some of their household belongings and farm animals that they could possibly save to live like refugees in their own community. They stayed for several weeks in an over-crowded school buildings under unhealthy living conditions without adequate food. Some of the women who had to walk long miles were pregnant. While for the village people evacuation and bombings mean not only extreme inconvenience but also loss of their meager property and exposure to diseases and hunger, for the government this is a normal consequence of counter-insurgency. The evacuees were not compensated for the inconvenience they suffered nor for the loss of property. While counter-insurgency preserves the system that benefits the ruling class, the peasant families who are directly affected by militarization are the price of that system maintenance.

The economic impact of militarization on the peasant women's lives. Militarization has economic costs for the peasant women and their families. The evacuations had prevented peasants to work in the farms on certain periods. Since rice planting goes with the seasons, there were months

during the military operations and evacuations from villages that the peasants could not plant when it was the season to plant. There was a time when some rice plantation just dried up because the farmers could not harvest them. Some women who evacuated due to military operations found their vegetable plantations already gone when they came back to their farms. Some peasants lost their farm animals and belongings. Water buffalos ("kalabaw"), being used as draft animals, are indispensable to Filipino peasants. When they lose them, it means not only a significant economic loss but also poses a possibility that they would not be able to farm.

During military operations para-military troops also loot some of the property of the peasant families. Ate Loray, for example, talked about the soldiers getting their chicken which they could have used for their meal. Ate Beni talked about her cousin complaining about soldiers getting the canned goods, sugar and coffee, soap and other household items when they went to their house. She said the soldiers kicked the door of her house and acted arrogantly when they entered, throwing some plates and cups on the floor. Ate Lorena talked about a village woman who gave her last pound of rice to the soldiers who went to her house because they shot bullets into the air as they were approaching. Out of fear she gave the last pound of rice they had for that day leaving her and her children hungry. In fact the children cried because they were so hungry.

Militarization has also displaced peasant families from the convenience and benefits of living close to their farms. Some of the peasant women, who evacuated from an interior village because of military operations and bombings and settled in the town proper of Magsaysay, now spends on transportation which they didn't incur before. When they were living close to their farms, they could plant more vegetables for domestic consumption which they could not do in the town proper. Thus, militarization has not only separated members of peasant families but has also exacerbated their poverty.

The impact of militarization on the peasant organizations. Militarization has posed difficulties in organizing. The military is suspicious of any group gathering in the village if they are not government related. When the women plan to gather for group sessions for some days or at night they have to get permit at the mayor's office. There were at least two women I talked to, who were formerly part of the peasant women's organization, who now are not actively involved because of fear of reprisal or because they were advised by their relatives who are connected to the military that they should withdraw from political involvement. There are informers in the village who without intelligent verification report to the military new faces or gatherings of people they suspect as subversives or members of the New People's Army. For example, a leadership training meeting of the peasant women of one village chapter was reported by

an unknown informer that it was a meeting of the NPA although it was not. The soldiers came after the women's meeting was over. They found out that the group had a mayor's permit after they talked to the leader of the organization.

The peasant women also experienced set backs when the military conducted military operations against the peasant organizations in Mindoro in 1987. Ate Bering talked with regret about how military harassment in 1987 aborted a project their village peasant women's organization of approximately 20 members began concretizing:

> Our plan was good. We already had some capital to start with. Each member was able to save 100 pesos. Our plan was to put up a cooperative. Each member would contribute to the cooperative one can of rice and would help in running the cooperative. But there was military operation in the village. We were separated from each other, some members evacuated to other places. We could not continue with our project then.

Consumer and credit cooperatives on the village and community levels become community organizations in which peasants learn and can try out collective modes of producing, storing, and marketing of agricultural products. They are micro-alternative ways by which peasants learn cooperative values in economic organizations. These cooperative values are important in sustaining economic organizations that can empower them. Credit cooperatives, for example, are organizational ways by which peasants can subvert the monopoly control of usurers over the informal credit systems that exploit them. Consumer cooperatives are viable economic organizations that will allow peasants to have control over

the marketing of their produce. But within the instability created by militarization, peasants are deprived of a stable social environment necessary in sustaining them.

Sometimes cooperatives are also being directly sabotaged when, based on the experience of the peasant women, they are being suspected as a "store of the New People's Army". This can be economically costly for peasants who are on poverty level. For example, KMP-Mindoro into which KAMMI was originally linked, lost 25,000 pesos worth of goods when their cooperative they believe, was sabotaged by the military. Ate Delita, who was then the treasurer of the cooperative, said that now this cooperative, that they successfully set up, is inoperative.

KMP was also in the process of setting up a warehouse and rice mill in 1988 in a village in Mindoro. The military threatened that if they continue with the project they would destroy the building. I saw part of this building, that the peasants already have built and spent money on, standing unused today. The organization is afraid that they would again lose thousands of pesos if they continue the project and the military might just destroy it. In fact, they had already been able to get approval for a loan to put into the project, but having the previous bad experience with the sabotage of their consumer cooperative, the organization thought of sitting on the project. Militarization, thus, has not only cost peasant organizations set backs in the growth of their

organization but has also brought them economic cost and have put their meager resources to waste.

In 1987, when the military systematically harrassed KMP by the use of arrests, torture, and imprisonment, the Peasant Women of Mindoro also experienced organizational set back. Through psychological warfare, the military succeeded in breaking the leadership of the organization. The women heard through the radio that peasant women's organizations are "communist organizations" and they must not be allowed to exist, that they will be raided and searched. The women burned all their organizational documents, some buried them, and some of the leaders left the village, and they stopped meeting for some time. The military also called some of the peasant women for interrogation and warned them not to join organizations if they are not government organizations. While before the systematic harassment in 1987, KMP and the Peasant Women of Mindoro freely conducted mass demonstrations, at the time of my field work, they had refrained from mobilizing for mass demonstrations as a form of protest. In the peasant women's assessment, mass demonstrations at this time is not a good strategy since mass leaders can be easily identified. Under the heightening of militarization in the villages and rural areas they see this strategy of protest may not be the most appropriate at this point. The broken pieces need to be re-consolidated first. And this is the immediate task the peasant women are faced with. The Peasant Women of Mindoro

was in this re-consolidation phase at the time of my field work. It is resurging. This shows that military repression, though in fact may cause set backs in the organizational strength of movement organizations, these set backs are temporary. As long as their agenda for change are systematically excluded from the existing development policies, social formations will continue to rise through which the goals and ideology of the peasant movement and the peasant women's movement for change can express itself. In the next chapter on the politics of the peasant women's resistance, I touch on the details of their reconsolidation and revival.

Not an isolated case. The experience of the peasant women of KAMMI on the politics of repression is not an isolated case. This was indicated by the sharing of experiences of the members of the National Council of AMIHAN during their National Council Meeting in Manila during the later part of July 1989. The meeting, which I observed, lasted for 3 days and was attended by 22 peasant women representing the various local chapters of AMIHAN across the country. Their collective experience indicated that militarization is systematic throughout the country, as part of the national policy of ruling.[18] Their experiences reflected the repressive strategies similar to the ones I have discussed. Each woman believed that militarization was one of the major difficulties and problems she encountered in her

family, work, and political lives. Selly, a young peasant women from the Visayas region (central region of the Philippines) lost her father because he was killed by the military. Rosa, from the same region, told how the military labelled a whole village as supporters of the New People's Army and called on them to declare themselves as NPA surrenderees. Anita, another representative from Mindanao (southern region of the Philippines) described the massacre of the family of an AMIHAN member. Others spoke of family dislocation because their husbands were harassed by the military or imprisoned because of their political activities.

From the perspective of the peasant women, these similar experiences of repression contradicted President Corazon Aquino's claim during her visit in Europe that human rights violations from militarization were "isolated cases". Ate Isabel, for example says:

> The position of Cory Aquino in Europe was that she was innocent about the human rights violations, that if there were human rights violations, they were isolated cases and they have acted on them. But within a span of three years there has been an intensification of militarization and human rights violations have gotten worse.

The experience of the politics of repression is also not just limited to the members of the Peasant Women of Mindoro. The two peasant women national leaders of AMIHAN (at the time of my fieldwork), who are not from Mindoro, also carry in their lives the impact of militarization. For example, Ate Loy, cannot go back to the province where she comes from and where her children and husband live because the military

raided her house searching for her. She is separated from her family whom she misses very much. Despite the price she had to pay, Ate Loy continues her vigilant commitment to the movement for change in the Philippines.

Another peasant woman national leader, Ate Deding, who suffered tremendously comes from another region of the Philippines. She lost her husband because he was slowly tortured to death by the military in a public place to show the village people what could happen to them if they join political organizations. Ate Deding recalled:

> The military slashed his face several times, and while blood was oozing down his whole body, they would hit him on his stomach. Then finally, they shot him on his head. If they knew that they were anyway going to kill him, why did they not do it at once, why did they still had to let him suffer slowly?

According to Ate Deding her husband was well-loved by the village people, and they were angered, not frightened, by what the military did to him. At 23, Ate Deding became a widow with 5 children. She had to support her family all by herself by doing all kinds of work -- as a peasant, as a laundry woman, as a market vendor. The experience, however, has not broken Ate Deding's spirit. Instead it has strengthend her commitment to the movement for change in the Philippines:

> As long as the people whom my husband has awakened are still in the movement, I will not stop being in the forefront for change.

The national and global connection. While the politics of repression is rooted in the national structures of the Philippines, it has also global connections. The politics of

repression in the Philippines is supported by the United States through military aid and maintenance of the U.S. bases. The maintenance of the power relations in the Philippines serves the U.S. multinational corporations that control approximately 80% of foreign investment in the Philippines, including agribusiness that has taken lands away from peasants.[19] At the same time this power relations serve the interests of the ruling elite in the Philippines, comprising mostly of the landed class. This class also largely benefits from capitalism that interlocks itself into the Philippine feudal relations of production in which landless peasant women and men are an exploited class. This connection between capital transnationalization and the Philippine ruling elite cannot depend simply on the logic of capital accumulation to entrench itself over time. State repression then becomes part of the politics of development and underdevelopment in the Philippines. In the politics of repression, the peasant women and their families do not only become the victims, but are made invisible participants in its maintenance. This invisibility prevents public awareness and is a subtle way to manage consent of the peasant women to the very system that exploits them. And this is how the Philippine state, which is linked to the U.S. imperial state, doubly oppresses the peasant women of Mindoro.

Repression as part of the politics of ruling and the power structures and the dynamics of exploitation that it

attempts at maintaining, however, engenders resistance. The very emergence of KAMMI and AMIHAN is an indicator of this resistance. In the following chapters I will examine the politics of the peasant women's resistance.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has examined how the peasant women's everyday lives are enmeshed into the interlocking power structures that keep them poor, exploited, and repressed. The peasant women's everyday lives reflect their experience of the dynamics of these structures because these are power structures that interlock in the broader society in which they live. This examination of the everyday lives and the experience of the peasant women of KAMMI reveals a complex system of power relations that help us understand why they are poor, exploited and repressed. There is no single cause to their situation, but rather a complex interactions of various power structures that subordinate and exploit them. When viewed within the broader political economic context, their experience provides insights that allow us to see the complex dynamics of the politics of underveloprnent in the Philippines, that GNP as an index of development or underdevelopment traditional policy-makers commonly use, cannot account for. Beginning from the experience of the peasant women, this examination pointed to the fact that the poverty of the peasant women results from interactions between their class

position and gender. However, this poverty also becomes the context in which the politics of exploitation in the village economy reproducess itself. The money-lenders (usurers), landlords, traders -- all benefit from the position the peasant women occupy in the class and gender hierarchy. The state, through its politics of repression and option for a development ideology that serves transnational capital and continued external control of Philippine political economy has assumed an "instrumentalist" (Miliband 1969) role in the exploitation of peasant women. It has legitimized the structures that exploit the peasant women's productive and reproductive roles. While the development policies it promotes have not trickled significant economic, social, and political benefits to the peasant women, the state has exploited the productive and reproductive roles of the peasant women in the social maintenance of its repressive military. Militarization has caused tremendous difficulties in the women's family, work, and political lives. It has exacerbated their poverty, while it represses political change in the power structures and development policies that make the peasant women poor and serve the interest of the landlords.

While the peasant women are very much integrated in agricultural development through their productive and reproductive roles, the nature of such development is such that it keeps most of the peasant women and men as landless producers who do not only own the land they till but also have

no control over their produce. The nature of the relations of production that result from this arrangement is such that the peasant women do not benefit nearly as much as those who own the land and control the produce of the land. In the absence of government subsidy on farm production, the state and landlord-tenant relations have placed the high cost of production on most of the women while their share from the harvest is inadequate for the subsistence of their families. The waged agricultural workers are even in a precarious position as their low wages cannot meet their basic needs and they cannot be certain of being hired all the time. The privatization of production integrates the peasant women into agricultural production and development, but in an exploitative way. It makes their significant contribution in production remain invisible and unrecognized, and deprives them of their and their children's economic rights.

Externally-control development programs, such as the Green Revolution and the policies of the IMF on the Philippine loan package -- forces of economic imperialism in the Philippines -- have not improved the quality of life of the peasant women and their families. The Green Revolution brought them into greater debt bondage while it has benefited the transnational corporations who control the foreign rice variety and the agro-chemicals on which the HYV is heavily dependent. The IMF policies have brought the country into greater external debt trap putting more economic

pressures on the peasant women as they experience the consequent increase in prices. While the women experience scarcity of rice in their village, the government allocates rice for export to pay foreign loans. In the final analysis, the peasant women (and the rest of the peasantry) are the ones bearing most the burden of debt, under the context of the interlocking power structures into which their lives are enmeshed.

The peasant women's integration into this nature of development, in which there is the interlocking dynamics of feudal/capitalist relations of production, privatization of production and the market, economic imperialism, and the politics of repression, does not bring economic and political empowerment to the peasant women. This is because the nature of such development is sustained and reproduced through class and gender exploitation. The dynamics of these power structures negatively impact on both the peasant women and men because of their class position, but the peasant women experience this dynamics in a particular way as they get exploited through their productive and reproductuve roles and their place in the sexual division of labor.

These forces, however, have not remained unchallenged. Different sectors in the Philippines have organized various forms of collective resistance towards challenging the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines -- both aboveground and underground. AMIHAN, the national federation

of peasant women's organizations in the Philippines, is one of these aboveground organizations that have articulated collective resistance to the politics of underdevelopment in the Philippines. In the following chapters I will examine the politics of resistance of AMIHAN, beginning with the local politics of KAMMI.

NOTES

1. This finding supports what Cynthia Banzon-Bautista says in her "Capitalism and the Peasantry: A Review of Empirical Literature", Philippine Sociological Review 31 (1983): 17-26. Here she cites Theodore Shanin's (1973) assertion that peasants are not only exploited by landlords but also by money-lenders who extract a share from the peasants' produce through interest on loans.

2. "Para ba akong nangliliit kung nanghihiram ako ng pera". This statement, which cannot really be literally translated in English, implies a feeling that one's sense of dignity is insulted.

3. Recipients of CLT, under the Marcos land reform program, had to pay amortization to the landlord or to the Land Bank of the Philippines for 15 years before they could claim ownership of the land specified in the Certificate. Poor peasants could not afford this amortization. Unable to pay the amortization regularly, the peasants could lose his right to the land as well as forfeit his CLT and paid amortization. Most landlords also resisted transfer of their land to the tenants. Ate Beni, for example, said that their landlord is resistant to the terms of the CLT.

4. See Mindoro regional file, table on "Palay Production Per Municipality, 1984-1989".

5. "Lugaw", translated in English as pooridge, is usually a survival meal among poor families, something they resort to when they have very little rice for so many members of the family.

6. Information about the Quedan Financing Scheme included here I have gathered through an interview with someone who was working with Quedan. I did not know anything about the existence of Quedan before my fieldwork. I learned about it in the process of my interviews with some staff members of the National Food Authority, Mindoro Branch, one of whom mentioned the existence of Quedan, but did not give enough information about it. I then, interviewed a staff member whose work is directly connected with the Quedan Financing Scheme.

7. Information regarding the National Food Authority, a

government bureau set up for the procurement and marketing of agricultural products, I gathered through interviews with 5 personnel in the National Food Authority, Mindoro Branch Office. I decided to gather information about this government agency, since the peasant women mentioned NFA several times in their conversations. So I thought I should learn more about it. The existence of the NFA was unknown to me before the fieldwork, until I heard the name from the peasant women and I thought I should do something about my own ignorance.

8. Not every peasant in Mindoro wants to be a member of the Samahang Nayon (SN). A former member of SN was very critical about this organization. He said he left it because it was inutil ("walang kabuluhan"). He criticized its leaders who told them that as an organization they would acquire tractors, but it was only the leaders who were using the tractors. He later joined KMP-Mindoro when it was still openly active before it was harassed by the military in 1987. KMP (Peasant Movement of the Philippines) is a militant and progressive non-governmental peasant organization, open both to men and women and has chapters throughout the country, of which KMP-Mindoro was one of them.

9. Information about Valiant I gathered through an interview with its manager while he was at his office at the Corporation's rice mill and warehouse in San Jose, Mindoro.

10. I learned about this corruption from one of the personnel in NFA whom I interviewed at the NFA's office, Mindoro Branch.

11. At first I took Ate Gansa's response with reservation, I could not be sure if she was realy right. So I asked during the group interview if indeed the Philippines export rice. Ate Gansa answered with firm certainty: "Yes, that is certain". The other peasant women nodded their heads. This gave me the insight to find out if Mindoro exports rice when I did my interviews of the NFA personnnel. The information I got confirmed the peasant women's perception and explanation.

12. Information culled out from NFA's document on Occidental Mindoro's dispersal plan for February-September 1989.

13. I have approximated this number from the document provided by the NFA regional file on the "Rate of Absorption, Occidental Mindoro, 1980-1990".

14. I have computed the figures here from the table on "Monthly Production, Occidental Mindoro" from 1983 to 1988

provided by the NFA regional file in Mindoro, materials acquired during my interview of NFA personnel. The table did not specify the unit of measurement, so I assumed that it is in metric tons.

15. Data provided by NFA regional file on "Rate of Absorption, Occidental Mindoro, 1980-1990".

16. I have computed this average from the NFA regional file, table on "Historical NFA Stocks, Rice Form, Occidental Mindoro, 1983-1990). Data for 1989-1990 were still missing in this table.

17. Ate Morina's analysis is supported by the findings of Philippine Peasant Institute. By the massive use of agro-chemicals in rice and corn production, fertilizer consumption rose from 101, 198 metric tons in 1956 to 563,000 metric tons in 1972, from 789,000 metric tons on 1975 to 1,153,600 metric tons in 1980. Pesticide importation also increased from 1.53 million kilos in 1953 to 9.52 million kilos in 1972. Pesticide production as well increased from 7,714 kilos in 1962 to .92 million kilos in 1971. For a detailed discussion on the penetration of TNCs in Green Revolution, see Tiongson, Marie Luz et al., "Agriculture in the 70s and 80s: TNC's Boon, Peasants' Doom". In Sowing the Seeds, ed. Rodolfo Desuasido, 22-49. Philippines: KMP, 1988.

18. There are other documentation of widespread human rights violations in the Philippines. See for example, Marciano, Marie, ed. Let's Work Together for the Protection of Human Rights of Filipino Women: A Documentation on the Human Rights Situation of Filipino Women. Philippines: GABRIELA Women's Commission on Human Rights, 1989.

19. See, for example, James Putzel and John Cunnington, Gaining Ground: Agrarian Reform in the Philippines (United Kingdom: WOW Campaign, 1989), 43-44.

CHAPTER 5

THE POLITICS OF THE PEASANT WOMEN'S RESISTANCE

[LOCAL POLITICS]

The politics of underdevelopment into which the peasant women's lives are enmeshed, do create the pre-conditions for organized resistance. The peasant women have opted not simply to be passive victims of underdevelopment. Instead, they are coming up with alternative politics of resistance.

The dynamics of the power structures that exploit, repress, impoverish the peasant women and their forms of resistance towards changing these structures is conflict. Micro-interactionists often look for conflict on the level of personal and human relations, seldom do they view conflict as structural. In this chapter, I view conflict more as structural, rather than the limited personal relational view of conflict. My focus is not so much on the internal conflict within the organization or movement, but rather how KAMMI as a whole confronts the social structures that impact on them. And that is structural conflict.

In the study of women in Third World development, it is important also to examine the politics of resistance poor women waged towards changing the nature of such development.

Such examination will not only present Third World poor women as social actors in the politics of change, but it provides insights on grassroot alternative development policies that often times are precluded from being articulated in official decisions of the state.

In the Philippines, the peasant women have come together to push for an alternative development change agenda. Knowing that the politics of underdevelopment has basically remained unchanged, even after the dictatorial regime of Ferdinand Marcos, 86 peasant women, representing various peasant women's organizations from different regions of the Philippines, formally launched a national coalition of peasant women's organizations in the Philippines on October 25-26, 1986 in Manila. They named it AMIHAN. Before AMIHAN was formed as a national coalition, there were already local peasant women's organizations in the rural regions in the Philippines. However, since the coalition was formed, AMIHAN's membership has expanded. From an individual membership of 5,000 and 10 member organizations in 1986, it has grown in 1989 to 15,000 individual membership and 19 member organizations from the different regions of the country.

In this chapter, I will examine the local politics of AMIHAN, by looking at the politics of resistance of KAMMI (Peasant Women of Mindoro), one of its local chapters. I refer to "politics" here in a broad sense. It includes the forms of resistance the peasant women engage in to change the

structures, ideas, and ideologies that impact on their everyday lives; the issues they raise and how they articulate their views, perspectives, analysis, and stance on these issues; how they come together to define and solve their problems; their strategies for collective action for change and their claim for a common voice; as well as their everyday conversation about the social situation surrounding them. I will examine in what ways this "politics" respond or relate to the larger structures into which the peasant women's everyday lives are enmeshed (which I have analyzed in the previous chapter). My purpose is not to make an evaluation of their organization or action based on some external criteria or political theory evolved from western or First World experience, but rather to see their change agenda and action from their own perspective and indigenous experience.

AMIHAN At the Local Level:The Politics of KAMMI (Peasant Women of Mindoro)

Persistence Amidst Militarization: KAMMI's Birth, Setback and Re-organization

Persistance in the context of state repression, that attempts at suppressing political action, is a form of resistance. The history of KAMMI indicates persistence in the midst of militarization. KAMMI was formally launched in a Provincial Congress held in San Jose, Mindoro on February 23-25, 1987. In this First Congress, KAMMI ratified its Constitution, which they have framed on the Constitution of

AMIHAN, but made some modifications to suit it to their particular situation in Mindoro. Approximately 100 individual members from approximately 7 pre-organized local village chapters attended the founding Congress. The national office of AMIHAN demonstrated support for the founding of KAMMI by sending one of its national peasant leaders to be present in this Congress and conduct a workshop. Some peasant men, who were members of KMP-Mindoro (Peasant Movement of the Philippines-Mindoro Chapter) also indicated their support by attending the Congress.

Most of the initial members and organizers of KAMMI were wives of members of KMP-Mindoro. This partly influenced the organizational structure of KAMMI at its inception -- KAMMI began as a joint orgnaization with KMP-Occidental Mindoro. It was then officially named as KMP-KAMMI. As a joint organization, they held mass action, such as rallies and demonstrations to publically demand for land reform and an end to militarization. They also held a symposium-dialogue that exposed the military abuses in Mindoro. Since they could mobilize a big number of people, they considered those days the "heyday" of the peasant movement in Occidental Mindoro. Teka, a young peasant women recalls how they felt about those mass actions:

> You know we were very happy when we would hold rallies and demonstrations. We would ride a truck, there would be so many of us in the truck. We carried placards... but now we cannot do it anymore.

However, beginning August 1987 (within the period when

President Aquino made a statement to "unshield the sword of war"), only a few months after the first Provincial Congress of KAMMI, militarization became more intense in Mindoro. Military operations were mainly directed against KMP members and their projects. Many KMP members were arrested, tortured, and killed. This violence was accompanied with a "war of words" (Scott 1985) against KMP. With the use of the media, the military red-baited KMP, calling its members communists and supporters of the New People's Army and thereby legitimizing their repressive action against the growing popular movement for political change in Mindoro. Some women heard in the radio the military labelling women's organizations as communists. Ate Morina, a 64 year-old provincial peasant leader and one of the initial organizers of KAMMI, described the nature of this military harassment in 1987:

> It was broadcasted in the radio, "those women are behind the Communist Party". Every week it would be broadcasted in the radio about leaders who had been killed in other places. These were also covered in the newspaper, leaders that were killed in places like Davao. This frightened the women. Militarization is the first obstacle to our organization.

The fear caused among the women by this "war of words" was founded on the fact that many women in Mindoro lost their husbands because of militarization.

From the perspective of the peasant women the military harassment on KMP was the government's response to their demands for agrarian change. Ate Delita, who was elected

provincial treasurer during the first Provincial Congress of KAMMI, said: "We were harassed by the military because we were carrying issues like land reform".

The 1987 military harassment against KMP also brought disorganization in KAMMI. Many of its leaders and members were dispersed. KAMMI could not hold formal organizational meetings for several months.

This disorganization, however, did not entirely paralyze KAMMI. Despite harassment, people still involved. Some leaders in exile from their villages, find ways to return from time to time, or otherwise to stay in tune with local events. Despite the repression, some local chapters persisted, such as the local chapter of Magsaysay.

Several factors accounted for the persistence of Magsaysay local chapter even after the members' evacuation from their village during the 1987 military operations. First, most of the of the members of this chapter settled close to each other in one part of the town area of Magsaysay when they evacuated from their village in 1987 because of bombings by the military that forced them to leave their village in 1987. Second, leaders remained with the community rather than leave the village or go into hiding, as in other areas. Their active presence and involvement influenced the continuance of the organization. Ate Bon for example observes this in Ate Lorena who is a significant leader in this group. Third, this local chapter had a socio-economic project, a piggery, that provided

a context for the women to do something concrete together and which at the same time responded to their everyday economic need. Since these women are poor the economic survival of their families is an urgent need. For example, Ate Jo who has 2 young children and does not own the land she and her husband till says:

> The military is suspicious about people organizing. They do not like organizations like ours. But our will was strengthened by the project. It was the project that consolidated, strengthened ("nagpatibay") the organization.
>
> Some do not like meetings because it takes time from their busy day. Sometimes only a few come to meetings. But when there is a project many come to the meeting.

The leaders of this local chapter played a key role in bringing the members together through this project. They made a resolution defining their project and got the signature of each member. Then they submitted it to Mindoro Institute for Development (MIND) for funding. They organized a 2-day training seminar for the management of the piggery project. A specialist on piggery-raising was provided by MIND to conduct the training. After the training, the local chapters received the piglets from MIND.

For this local organization, a socio-economic project, such as the piggery, although not entirely without problems (such as inadequate funding and lack of land to make it a collective piggery) became a useful way to bring the organization together because it provided women work during non-planting season or dry season and gave them a little

additional money to their inadequate income from farm work. It responded to a very urgent everyday need. Thus Ate Jo says:

> The piggery was of much help to us, because the women do not have means of income when it is not planting season and that vegetables do not grow well during dry season.

Ate Bon who has 3 school-age children also found the piggery project useful for meeting school needs:

> The piggery was a help from the Organization. I had to sell it earlier (prematurely) because of our poverty, so I could sell it only at a lower price. I used the money to pay for the school expenses of my children. I gained 500 pesos; I took care of it for 5 months.

The revival and reorganization of KAMMI on the provincial level. The persistence of local leaders, members, and some local chapters despite the harassment, led to the revival and re-organization of KAMMI on the provincial level. In early part of 1988 four key provincial leaders of KAMMI (Ate Ara, Ate Lorena, Ate Morina, Ate Delita) informally met and reflected on their experiences with the military operation against KMP and its implications for their organizational work. They came up with the resolution to continue the organization, contact the previous members of the chapters, but this time to change approach and tactics in organizing. Among these changes were: a) that members could be any peasant woman, not necessarily KMP members or wives of KMP members, b) that KAMMI would now be organizationally independent from KMP, c) to make cooperative projects as a beginning context for organizing, instead of public demonstrations that openly

and directly attack the government, d) change some leaders and recruit new members.

Ate Delita:

> We want that KAMMI will be separated from KMP since KMP has already the ire of the military. That is why the women's organization should just be separated. But there are still some who want that KMP and KAMMI should be together, and there are also those who want it separate from KMP. It does not mean that we are angry at KMP. If there is negotiation to be done it should be on the level of organization to organization.

Ate Lorena:

> We changed the structure and our strategy because of the military haraasment. Before we directly criticize the government. Now we have changed the approach, we begin with socio-economic project - we see first what needs the people have.

Ate Morina:

> 1989 is just when we are reviving. The name is the same, but we change our strategies and the leaders. We first work on light issues. We do not first start with direct action. Before, we start with direct action, this time we begin with socio-economic project like day care, health projects.

This informal meeting was then followed by a provincial ad hoc consultation of local leaders and members of the previous local chapters that could possibly be still contacted. The consultation was held in San Jose, the urban capital of Mindoro, on Women's International Day, March 8, 1988. They had a community Mass ("Misang Bayan"), using rice as a symbolic offering for their prayers. Usually, it is a host made of wheat that is used as offering during Masses in Churches. But here, in this religious ritual, the peasant women used rice -- something that symbolizes their work, their

needs, their everyday lives -- something indigeneous to their way of life. The women and the priest who ministered in this event expressed a thanksgiving prayer for the rebirth of the women ("pasalamat dahil sa nabuhay uli ang kababaihan").

During this consultation those present also discussed how to revive and re-organize KAMMI. They arrived at the consensus that KAMMI would now be an independent organization from KMP, mainly because KMP, which has been largely led by the men, was the main target of the 1987 military harassment and operations. War-between-the-sexes was not so much the reason the peasant women articulated for opting for organizational independence from KMP, than what they perceive was a strategic response to the political situation in which they are operating in reviving and re-organizing KAMMI. Since the men were now unable to lead publically because of the military operations that were primarily directed at them, the peasant women now see that it is their turn to take the leadership and assume more public responsibility. As a joint organization with KMP, KAMMI generally assumed supportive roles, while the peasant men generally took leadership roles. Since the peasant men were more publically visible, the 1987 military harassment was primarily directed at them.

To set up a structure for the re-organization and revival of KAMMI, they set up an adhoc committee of leaders to prepare and lay the groundwork for a formal consultation of former chapters in April 1988. This involved reviving the local

chapters who also experienced set backs ("mga tulog na tsapter"), first by personally visiting them. When they held the formal consultation in April 1988, KAMMI elected its provincial leaders. They planned to organize new village chapters (at least 3 in each municipality), recruit new members and develop new leaders before their next Provincial Congress. Since their April 1988 formal consultation, the provincial leaders have been able to visit the local chapters they planned to visit, organize a seminar on the provincial level, organize a provincial instructors' training for 32 peasant women, re-organize local 5 village chapters, and organize 2 new ones. At the time of fieldwork, KAMMI had been able to consolidate 201 active members on the provincial level.

Since the formal revival of KAMMI on the provincial level, it has been able to hold regular monthly provincial consultation meetings for purposes of coordination and discussion of problems and plans. These consultations are attended by representative local leaders of the local chapters as well as by the members of the Provincial Council. However, during times when the women are busy with their work in the farm, I have observed that they are flexible in scheduling these meetings.

The revival of KAMMI speaks about the courage of the peasant women and their persistence in the midst of militarization. Ate Ara, a courageous committed provincial

leader, says on how to deal with the difficulties of organizing under militarization:

> Inner strength, courage, even if there is militarization we persist organizing. Like me, even if I was harassed, I did not give in to fear, instead I faced up to them.

Indeed, one remarkable trait that I have observed the peasant women have is courage beneath their seemingly fragile look -- a courage nourished by a social consciousness. Ate Lalay, a very hard working peasant organizer and very self-sacrificing in setting up the local chapter in her village, says:

> Well, I am not doing anything that is wrong, why should I be afraid of them. Before I was not yet aware, conscious, now I am.

Thus, for the peasant women, their organizational involvement is their public articulation of their values, social awareness and concern. The peasant women often articulated words that indicated political consciousness and social concern : "matatag na principyo" (strong principles) and "hindi makasarili" (not to be self-centered). I see that it is this sense of community, courage, and political social consciousness of active leaders and members that sustains the life and revival of KAMMI. It is also in their organizational involvement that they develop or grow in these qualities. To what extent this is a factor to the persistence of KAMMI in comparison with other factors is not acertained by this research, but it does play a role. However, this consciousness does not take place in a vacuum -- it is fertilized and

nourished in the process of organized resistance. Courage is strengthened amidst military suffering. Political consciousness dawns as one becomes more aware of why they are oppressed or poor as peasants and as women. Once consciousness is attained it fuels action and action leads to deeper consciousness that leads to further action. Praxis is thus constructed. The expression of this conciousness may be uneven, but nonetheless it will always articulate itself. Most of the leaders of KAMMI, who are actively engaged in its survival, in fact, have had previous political involvements even before they took part in constructing KAMMI. For example, Ate Delita was a member of the Federation of Free Farmers that emerged during the Marcos regime. Ate Morina, along with her husband, had been politically involved in the 1950's in the HUK movement, that was crushed under President Ramon Magsaysay with the counter-insurgency strategy of U.S. CIA's Edward Lansdale.

The revival of KAMMI, however, is not without risk in the context of the continuing politics of repression in the Philippines. In its psycho-war methods of repression, the military lately made a new verbal attack on peasant women. Ate Lorena said that in June 1989, the latest she heard in the radio was a report that "now it is the peasant women who will support the New People's Army because the male NPA's are becoming weak, so now it will be the women who will act". Although KAMMI is an above-ground organization, it faces risks

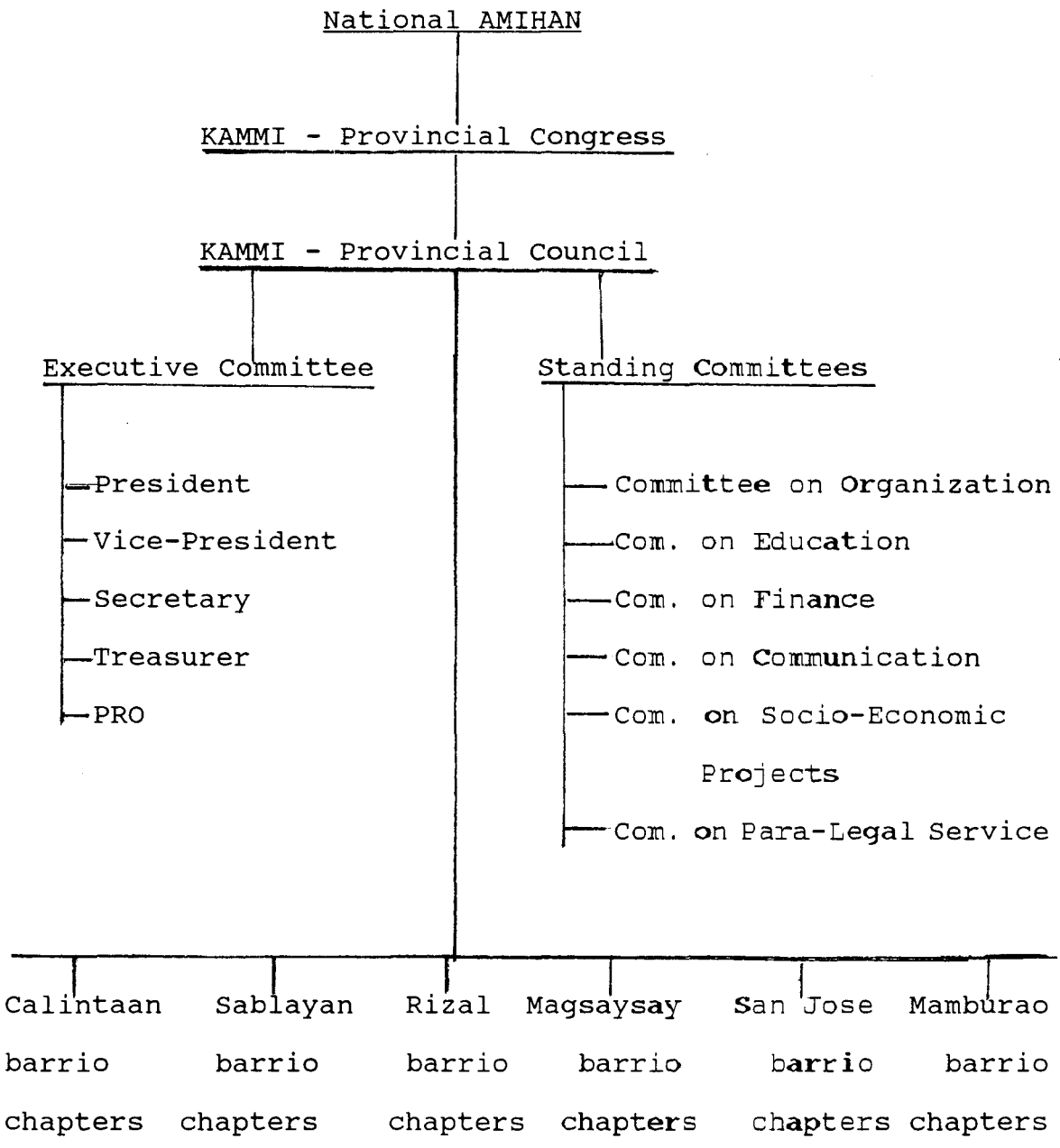
in being labelled by the military and in the military's total war approach to counter-insurgency.

Yet, KAMMI's revival indicates that while militarization is directed at suppressing dissent to preserve existing asymmetrical power structures, it in fact creates the pre-conditions for organized resistance that is fertilizing the ground for social change. Militarization may affect strategies for change, but it does not necessarily suppress resistance. It may indeed cause temporary setbacks to political organizations, but it does not seem to effectively suppress it. Militarization, in fact, leads people to different forms of political action towards changing the power relations it wants to preserve.

In the next section, I will examine the organizational politics of KAMMI as a formal organization, its ideology, the various development issues it raises, the major components of its work for change, and the forms of resistance that it has attempted.

The Formal Organizational Structure of KAMMI

Although it is true that informal networks within any organization or movement play an important role in initiating and sustaining its life, formal organizational structures is just as important to keep it going. KAMMI therefore has come up with a formal structure for itself. KAMMI's formal organizational structure can be diagramed this way:



The Provincial Congress is the highest administrative body of KAMMI. It is comprised of all individuals who are considered official members of the organized chapters of KAMMI. It meets once a year. Each chapter sends

representatives depending on what it decides upon based on the size and level of the chapter. Each delegate is entitled to one vote.

The Provincial Council is composed of elected delegates of the local chapters who have the right to elect the positions comprising the Executive Committee and the chairpersons of the Standing Committees. Elected positions of the Executive Committee automatically assumes administrative functions for the Provincial Council. Ordinarily, it meets every 3 months and takes the responsibility of implementing plans formulated in the Provincial Congress, as well as the on-going planning and assessment of KAMMI's activities in between the meetings of the Provincial Congress. It is in the Provincial Council meetings that the delegates get an idea of how the different local chapters are going on in their work.

The Executive Committee is composed of constituents elected by the Provincial Congress, but it is the Provincial Council that elects these constituents to different positions at its first meeting after the Provincial Congress. The Executive Committee has the administrative responsibility for the Provincial Council. It meets every month.

KAMMI has 6 standing committees that take charge of different tasks. The Committee on Organization takes charge of expanding the membership of KAMMI, in steering the formation of new local chapters, in mobilizing participation

were no municipal federation of the village or barrio chapters. The village chapters were directly linked to the Provincial Council through their representatives.

The formal federation of KAMMI on the provincial level took place only when there were already the existence of some local chapters. After the first Provincial Congress wherein the Provincial Federation was formalized, the organization of local chapters continued.

KAMMI as a provincial Federation is linked to AMIHAN, the National Federation of Peasant Women in the Philippines, through its representation in its bi-monthly National Council meeting in Manila, the largest urban center in the Philippines. KAMMI is usually represented by its Provincial President and by a second designated person when 2 are required by the National Council. Expenses for attending the National Council meetings are usually provided by the National Office of AMIHAN. KAMMI also sends representatives to the National Congress of AMIHAN which takes place every two years.

This formal structure somehow provides a structure of routinizing certain functions of the organization, such as the holding of regular meetings or consultations that serve as a forum for the articulation of needs, problems, and make them part of the organizational agenda. Without formal structure, informal articulations of needs may not be given organizational expression.

Principles of Organization

How is this formal organizational structure, that I have described above, given flesh by a network of relationships that may not be immediately visible in formal organizational meetings? In this section I will mainly talk about the ways KAMMI establishes networks, connects people with one another, sustains these connections, and KAMMI's principles and views of organizing. It is important to include these organizational processes here, not only because they are part of their organizational politics, but because they have theoretical significance: while it is true that the politics of underdevelopment creates the pre-conditions for organized resistance, it is the peasant women's volition that plays a significant role in the formation of this organized resistance.

Role of kinship and political affiliation. In Philippine village, kinship relations is one of the most common, customary ways by which people get connected to each other. In some cases, the beginning point of formal organizational relationships is kinship, relationships among relatives either by blood or by marriage. For example, in the local village chapters in Calintaan and Magsaysay, kinship played a significant role in bringing people together. Since the peasant women are organizing within a context of repression, that puts them in a situation wherein they have to be careful with whom they are dealing with, they feel more secure when

they know that the person they are bringing into the organization is someone they know or could be trusted because he is a relative. For example, Ate Do said, "In our chapter most of us are relatives because at least we could trust each other ("makapagkakatiwalaan"), especially now with the kind of situation we have, it is difficult ("mahirap na ngayon").

Kinship relations may be the source of strength in the formal organizational relationship. In the perspective of Ate Glin, for example, kinship played an important role in keeping their local chapter together even after they evacuated from their village because of military bombings: "Our organization here is strong because most of us are relatives ("magkakamag-anak").

In Philippine village culture (as in Philippine culture in general), one of the demands of kinship is helping in times of need. It is a cultural expectation that relatives must help each other. One who does not help his/her relatives is mostly looked upon with scorn among relatives as well as others in the community. This cultural expectation is carried into the network of relationship in KAMMI's formal organization.

However, since mass organization goes beyond kinship relationships, kinship is not always the basis for trust to begin connecting people for collective action or organization, but rather the political affiliation or views of the person. Because of the presence of informers in the village, who are

suspicious of people gathering together and reports their suspicion to the military, the peasant women find it important to know the person's political alliance in bringing members into the organization. While this indicates the limits the repressive situation puts on KAMMI's mobilization, it is also a form of ideological resistance that becomes a practical concern when peasant women's everyday lives are threatened by the continuing militarization.

Tapping existing networks: friendship and church relations. To begin organizing a local chapter, the peasant women organizers usually make use of already existing informal networks. Usually they organize a meeting where women they invite could come together to talk about their concerns and to introduce the goals of KAMMI. The peasant women would usually invite women they already know to come to this beginning meeting. Since there is no telephone system in the villages, they would usually begin their mobilization to this first meeting by visiting them personally and informally already talk to them about KAMMI. They also apply the strategy of what I call "chain mobilization" -- that is, they also encourage the initial people they invite to bring people they know and trust.

Those who are also active in their churches, make use of their church contacts in organizing a KAMMI local chapter. They invite people they know in their churches to come to KAMMI meetings. Those who do this do not see their church

work as fragmented from their community involvement which they can articulate through KAMMI. By doing so, they are integrating religion and women's politics.

Bases for membership recruitment. KAMMI's main target group for organizing are women from the poor peasantry. This is in fact stipulated in KAMMI's constitution. Since majority of the women in the Philippines comes from the poor peasant class, it is logical that KAMMI gives priority to poor peasant women. However, since KAMMI is constricted by militarization, some peasant leaders developed informal criteria in recruiting members. Those leaders and members who have experienced previous military harassments, especially after the 1987 harassment, use "trustworthiness" ("pagkakatiwalaan") as one of the bases for recruiting new members. They also assess the convictions of the of the person ("may paninindigan"), whether the person has the willingness to participate in collective action to change existing situations.

Some of the peasant women organizers also found it useful to bring in new members who they see have potentials for leadership since they are more willing to initiate action. In a sense, this is their way of reproducing leadership roles. Others found it easier to begin organizing local chapters when their initial members had previous experience in organizing or at least had previous experience in being part of an organization.

Organizing from "bottom to top" and "top to bottom".

The beginning point of KAMMI's organizing is the village. Village local chapters of at least 15 to 20 members are first organized before they are linked on the provincial level. However, since there is already a provincial federation, provincial leaders facilitate in organizing local village chapters in their respective areas by organizing ad-hoc steering committees of local village peasant women who take on responsibilities in organizing their own local chapters. Peasant women with leadership position on the provincial level cannot be elected as formal leaders of local village chapters. This policy promotes and develops local village leadership, which is very important in sustaining the life of the local village chapters. Provincial leaders, however, become active informal leaders in their own chapters, which gives them a sense of what's going on in their respective areas.

Because the beginning point of KAMMI's organizing is the village, different local village chapters differ in their organizational phase. At the time of my fieldwork, most of the local chapters were in their re-organization phase in which they were recovering from the setbacks of the 1987 harassment in Mindoro. The most consolidated was the chapter of Ate Ara in Sablayan, which began even before the birth of KAMMI as a provincial federation. The second most consolidated was the chapter of Ate Lorena in Magsaysay which continued to meet locally on their own even after the 1987 military harassment.

The beginning point of organizing as the village also gives rise to differences in the concrete projects and action among the local village chapters. This shows that the principle of organizing from the "bottom to top" is more likely to begin from the local needs and ideas of the village peasant women.

The organization of local village chapters is central to the organizational politics of KAMMI. Without local chapters, KAMMI as a provincial federation will have no base. Without the expansion and creation of new local village chapters, KAMMI, as a provincial federation will not be expanding.

Views on Organization and Collective Empowerment

Since one of the tactics of state repression is "divide and rule", the most important weapon of people who wage unarmed resistance to the politics of underdevelopment and repression in the Philippines, as in the rest of the Third World, is organization. For example, Ate Nor says that organization is important because it serves as a "defense of the people" ("depensa ng bayan"). Hence, in a repressive society organization of people becomes even more necessary. There is a sense of empowerment that the peasant women feel when they come together and collectivize themselves: "If we have no organization we cannot do collective action. We can make ourselves strong if we are organized", says Ate Lorena.

It is in coming together that the peasant women experience personal empowerment from realizing their capacity to act: "Now I realized that peasant women can also act ("puedeng kumilos") if there is collective action", says Ate Laya. They think that only with a collective voice can they make the government respond to their needs and rights: "If you deal with the government as an individual, they will not listen to you", says Ate Sarisa. It is also in organizing that peasant women feel they can assert their rights in agrarian relations. Ate Lucy for example asserts:

> A peasant woman loses her right to farm the land when her husband dies. If we have an organization ("samahan") we would be able to talk to the landlord that even if we are women we also have the capacity to farm the land and that we do not lose our right to farm the land when our husband dies.

To act collectively on their problems the peasant women see that they need to have a collective definition of their situation, and this can be facilitated only if they are organized. One peasant woman succinctly articulates this:

> The organization also facilitates exchange of ideas ("nagpapalitan ng kuro-kuro"). Because if we have no common understanding and action on our problems, it is likely that we will not solve our problems.

Hence, they also see the connection between organization and conducting "collective study sessions" wherein they can analyze and talk about their situation so they can understand it better. This is part of their concept of "united action".

Their views on organization, however, come from their experience of active involvement in organizational politics.

They create their organizational politics and they develop a theory or perspectives about it as they reflect about their experience.

KAMMI's View on Peasant Women and Development

In the previous section I explained how the founders of KAMMI based their Constitution on the Constitution of AMIHAN (the National Federation of Peasant Women) to which they belong. What does this document reveal about the views of these organized peasant women on development? While mainstream development paradigms generally look at peasant women only in relation to their work, KAMMI's Constitution (particularly its Preamble and its Declaration of Principles), sees peasant women in relation to their work (as peasants), to men (as women), and to the state (as citizens). The context of these interlocking relations is the struggle for economic and political rights ("karapatang pang-ekonomiya at pampolitika") within the broader political economy. Economically, KAMMI supports peasant women's economic right to : a) a decent and dignified livelihood ("makataong pamumuhay") in a free society ("malayang lipunan"); b) own the land they till ("ariin ang lupang nililinang") and make it productive; c) full benefit ("lubos na makinabang" and recognition ("kilanlin") of their significant role ("mahalagang papel") in production. In relation to men, KAMMI supports peasant women's struggle against patriarchial

relations and promotes equality between men and women. In relation to the state, KAMMI supports peasant women's, active participation in national politics through organization and collective action.

KAMMI treats these women's struggles as universal. The Declaration of Principles of KAMMI's Constitution states that the transformation of the feudal ("pyudal") and semi-feudal ("mala-pyudal") economic relations will bring equal political and economic rights to men as well as women, that the struggle against patriarchy is part of the struggle of the Filipino people, that a nationalist movement will end capitalist imperialism over all ("lahat") spheres of Philippine development, empower the poor ("naghihirap") and oppressed ("inaapi") through a democratic mass movement ("democratikong kilusan"), and empower peasant women through organization and education for critical consciousness.

This view of peasant women in development, reflected in KAMMI's Constitution, is in line with the shift in emphasis in recent peasant studies -- from a cultural perspective on the peasantry as a conceptual category to one oriented "towards describing and understanding the political and economic logic of peasants" (Bautista 1983, 17). Furthermore, it provides empirical evidence to the theoretical importance of including organized peasant women's views in the conceptualization of agricultural development.

This view of development in KAMMI's Constitution is also

related to the peasant women's everyday experience of underdevelopment. The politics of underdevelopment (that I have discussed in chapter 4) actually is experienced by the women in the context of their lives as peasants (in their productive work), as women (in their reproductive role and place in the sexual division of labor), and as citizens (in their experience of militarization). Hence, KAMMI's Constitution is, in a sense, a conceptualization of the politics of the peasant women's everyday lives. It is an organized articulation of their everyday experience of the politics of underdevelopment.

Gender and Class in the Peasant Women's Articulation of KAMMI's Objectives

Some proponents of national liberation still believe that gender politics can divide the movement. In 1984, a male Filipino activist told me over the phone not to bring in the "feminist issue" into the movement because the major issue is national liberation. Since I did not yet have an adequate understanding at that time about women and development, I could not argue with him and simply kept quiet. However, the peasant women leaders of KAMMI do not see gender issue separate from KAMMI's participation in the struggle for the transformation of Philippine political economy. For example, the provincial president of KAMMI at the time of fieldwork explains KAMMI's objectives in a way that addresses issues specific to peasant women as they struggle for agrarian

change:

> KAMMI's goal is to raise the status and struggle for the rights of peasant women, to improve and raise the livelihood of peasant women, and to work for genuine agrarian reform.
>
> The first and the second objectives are channels to the third objective, which is the ultimate objective. In a gradual process we can reach the third, how we can gain the right to own land.

Ate Jo, a peasant woman whose leadership role is concentrated in her local village chapter, explains further that the organization of peasant women is important for their political participation and recognition of their political rights in the struggle for agrarian reform:

> I thought that it is necessary that, like us peasants, have an organization, because it is of much help. You are made aware about the situation of women, that it is not just the men who must decide, that women also have rights. That we are not just for the home, that we also have rights. It is hard when you are just limited to the home.
>
> In land reform, that women also have a right to the title to the land, that they also have the right to have their name on the title to the land.

Ate Sarisa, who is a new organizer in the village level also does not see her initiative at organizing peasant women as divisive, but in fact good for everyone:

> It is the goal of the organization to have unity for the progress of the people there, and to improve the situation of the women.

There are also female proponents of national liberation who do not yet see the connection between gender and class. For example, a Filipina ex-nun, who was formerly active in the movement, also argued with me that it is only the middle-

class women who are raising feminist issues. However, the peasant women of KAMMI, who are poor women, do raise issues of gender and class in their perceptions of KAMMI's objectives. For example, Ate Morina, one of the original initiators of KAMMI says:

> Because we are poor, we want to improve our livelihood. It is necessary that women must now have equal rights with men. We desire that women must have rights because when they lose their husbands the government does not recognize them.... That they will learn to control their own lives. (italics mine)
>
> The real goal of the organization is land reform. That those who are poor can get out of this situation wherein they are just oppressed by the capitalists.

Ate Delita, who is a provincial leader and local organizer and separated from her husband because he disapproves of her political involvement, is even more emphatic about women's concerns, poverty and wealth:

> Improve, raise the livelihood of peasant women. Not at all times I am in the farm. If there are projects that we can get involved in, we can have changes that can take us out of poverty, especially economic needs.
>
> There is poverty because land distribution is not equal. Most of those who have lands are the rich. This is not yet being talked about very much in KAMMI. But this is the issue that KAMMI wants to struggle for.
>
> Give priority to women's issues. That which will liberate women so that they are not just oppressed.

Ate Lorena, another provincial leader and organizer, goes further by bringing the issues of gender equality, landlessnes, and empowerment through women's organization:

> Put women's rights equal to that of men. It is our aspiration to have our own lands we can till. This is the essence. If there is organization we will have a voice and strength.

Ate Norita, who is a new peasant woman organizer of a local village chapter in Mamburao also articulates the invisibility of peasant women: "It is time that we raise the recognition of women".

There are also some female activists who are concerned about national issues who do not yet see that women's issues as practical national concerns. One of the key female leaders of Alliance for Philippine Concerns, a support organization in the U.S. that educates Filipino and American audience on national issues in the Philippines, said while we were conversing that for her "women's issues are more of an intellectual issue". Ordinary members of KAMMI, however, raise very practical concerns in their reasons for joining KAMMI. They see a women's organization, such as KAMMI, whose politics are concerned about women's issues, as responding to their needs. For example, Ate Wona, a member of a village chapter in Calintaan who has young children to feed and whose husband had been sick brings in her very practical concerns in her reasons for joining KAMMI:

> So that we women can be united. So we could help each other. So we could think of ways in which we could have means of income to help our husbands. So that we could support each other in our needs.

Another example is Lou, a 17-year-old new member of the same local village chapter, who had not been able to continue to high school and now works in their landlord's farm. She finds practical benefit in joining KAMMI, an educational value that makes up for her lack of access to formal education:

> We have not been able to go to school even if we wanted to because we could no longer afford the expenses...that is why we joined this kind of organization because we learn something.

These articulations of the women indicate dominant themes: that their collective action and what brings them together to organize is their common experience arising from a) their class position (they are poor and they want to get out of that poverty), b) their perception of their place in gender relations (that there is a particularity to their situation because they are not only poor but that they are women who do not have equal rights with men, c) their perception of their place in the political economy (that they are peasants and they must have the right to own a land they can till, and that as peasant women must be recognized in the titling of lands in the process of agrarian reforms). These themes indicate that gender and class co-exist in the consciousness of these peasant women. And rightly so, because as poor peasant women, they experience what it means to be a woman in a situation of poverty or landlessness. Opponents of a woman's view and women's politics in the context of national liberation struggle, may yet have to learn from the perspective of politically organized poor peasant women.

Implicit in these articulations is a view of feminism that is interlocked with class and development issues. The women's place in their political economies somehow affect their organizational politics as it affects their everyday lives. In the following I will deal with the politics of land

and the forms of resistance KAMMI has attempted.

Peasant Awareness and Conceptualization of the Structure of Landownership and Class Formation in Mindoro

There is awareness among the peasant women of KAMMI about the structure of landownership and the class formation that develops from it in Mindoro and this awareness is part of their politics. This is indicated in their everyday language or discourse. Terence Ranger (1989) says that discourse is also a medium by which peasant consciousness expresses itself, hence discourse is also an important aspect of peasant politics.

The peasant women as well as the men use terms in their everyday language or discourse that speak about hierarchy and class position of people in relation to landownership. On top of this hierarchy is the "panginoon may-lupa" that the peasant women and others in Mindoro refer to. The "panginoon may-lupa" is a big landlord who at times may also hold political office. He owns large tracts of land but does not till the land himself. Many "panginoon may-lupa" in Mondoro usually have an administrator to manage the agricultural workers or tenants who may work on their tracts of lands to make them productive. They usually also may have other sources of income and wealth not derived from the land, such as a business investment. Other than economic power the "panginoon may-lupa", though they may be only few in Mindoro, also have political power. Sometimes this takes the form of coercive

power through the use of the military in suppressing peasant demands or initiatives for reforms, as will be illustrated in the later part of this section. "Panginoon" means "god". Intrigued by the term, I asked Ate Ara in one of my conversations with her why I would often hear that word referred to big landlords when they are not gods and that that term should be used only for GOD ("Diyos"). She said, "It does not mean we consider them our God, it means they are powerful".

Some "panginoon may-lupa" are absentee landlords -- which means that they do not live in Mindoro. They rely on their administrator to manage their land, who in turn hire agricultural workers to work on the land. Sometimes the "panginoon may-lupa" also has military power as indicated by his access to the military to serve as guards to his land. Ate Norita for example, speaks about Governor Medalla and a certain Almeda as "panginoon may-lupa" who uses the military to protect themselves and their lands.

> Almeda, a businessman in Manila, has huge rice lands. He is now abroad, visits here only occasionally. It is Philippine Constabulary men who visit and quard the work of the tenants. They are the ones who carry out the order of the "panginoong may-lupa". The quards at home are PC, they are paid by Almeda.

Next to the "panginoon may-lupa" is the "panggitnang may-lupa". These are middle-level landowners who are better off than average. They own more than average size of lands on which they do not necessarily till but are made productive by tenants or agricultural workers. They may not necessarily

hold political office, and if they do, usually it may be a local government position. Because he does not work on the land, he may also engage in other forms of economic activity such as trading or marketing of rice, or engage in informal credit system in the locality (usury) or may even manage a grocery store. The barrio captain in Calintaan whom we visited is an example of this "panggitnang may-lupa". The husband of Ate Lory, in whose house we spent a night and a day, considers their landlord who owns the land they till as "panggitnang may-lupa". Labrador in Calintaan who is a landlord of some of the peasant women in the local chapter there, and whom they mentioned in my group interview is also an example of "panggitnang may-lupa".

There are a few "panggitnang magsasaka" who own the land they till. Techay of the local chapter in Calintaan explains the term "magsasaka" as "may lupang sinasaka" (has a land to till). The "panggitnang magsasaka" is an average owner-tiller who may have medium size lands that his family tills. They may have some capital to put into production costs and may have access to formal credit (such as bank loans) for production inputs because they can use their lands as collateral. Sometimes they may hire seasonal labor to help in their farm if they cannot do all the work by themselves even with the help of other members of the family.

Then, there are the "mahirap na magsasaka", the poor small owner-tillers who usually own only a small piece of

land, less than 1 to 2 hectares. Although these group may not have a landlord to whom they share their produce, the returns from their harvest usually turn out to be extremely inadequate to meet their basic needs for several reasons. One is the size of their land which cannot really yield enough produce. Other reasons may include: a) the high cost of production which they usually borrow through usury in which they have to pay very high interest, b) the absence of second cropping due to lack of irrigation, c) no government subsidy for small producers.

There is also a class of "magsasaka" who do not own the land they till, the "magsasakang walang lupa". They work as tenants ("tenante") on the land of big landlords or middle-level landlords who are not tillers. Tenants generally can expect regular farmwork because they have a land to till even if they do not own it. Being a tenant means being responsible for making the landlords'land productive. Failure to do so could mean termination of the landlord-tenant relationship.

There are four systems of landlord-tenant relationship that have evolved in Mindoro. There is the "buwisan" system wherein the tenants, who shoulder all the costs of production, give to the landlord 12-15 cavans of palay per hectare of land that they farm. This is considered as "buwis" (tax) to the land. Even if the tenant may suffer loss of harvest from natural calamities, such as floods and typhoons, this term stays, which could mean that the tenant may be indebted to the

landlord if he is unable to meet the number of cavans. Sometimes to meet the term, the tenant have no harvest left for himself/herself, in which case he has to borrow cavans of rice or palay from the landlord for subsistence. The other system of landlord-tenant relationship is the "partihan" (crop sharing). There are 3 types of "partihan". One is the "70/30", where the tenants, shouldering all production costs, give 30% of their harvest to the landlord. Another is the "75/25", where the tenants, also shouldering all production costs, give 25% of the harvest to the landlord. And there is, least frequently, the "50/50" where the tenants equally share the harvest as well as the cost of production. None of these systems of relations is within existing laws. According to Ate Lorena: "In the law, if the farm is irrigated only 15% of the harvest should go to the landlord, if it is not irrigated 10%, and if harvest is not good, 5%".

Another class of peasants, and probably the largest in the country, is the "manggagawang bukid" as what Techay and others in Mindoro call them. The "manggagawang bukid" are landless agricultural workers who do not have lands that they could regularly till like the tenants. They work in the land of landlords and get paid by a daily wage or by a "pakyaw system" (where they get paid a fix rate for a particular task regardless of the number of days they work on it). The husband of Ate Dor for example at the time I visited her was working on a rice farm under a "pakyaw system" where he would

get 900 pesos when the job was done. The "manggagawang bukid" does not generally deal directly with the landlord, they are usually hired by an administrator of the landlord. Generally paid 20 to 25 pesos a day, the "manggagawang bukid" is usually insecure of not being able to get his labor hired, but also faces the insecurity of sub-standard wage.

There is another group of "manggagawang bukid", referred to in Mindoro as the "katulong" (helper). They generally ask to help a tenant who tills a land he does not own, not generally for daily wage but simply in order to get a share of the harvest at harvest time. The peasant whom he is helping provides him with daily meals in the field, such as lunch and "merienda" (snacks). Ate Beni of KAMMI's local chapter in Calintaan has a "katulong", a 16-year old nephew from another province who came to her village for the purpose of being able to work as "katulong" during planting season at the land Ate Beni, her husband, and her children till for a landlord. He was staying at Ate Beni's house and get his meals provided while working as "katulong". At harvest time he would get 20 cavans of palay which he would bring back to his parents in Panay. Ate Lorena and her husband, who are tenants under the buwisan system, also accepted a male "katulong" (who asked to be allowed to work as such) as a way to help him in his extreme poverty.

> I pity him, they have really nothing to eat. Because of poverty, his wife who just delivered a baby died because of flu, and of course may be she also lacked food. He has no food to give the baby.

Ate Lorena includes food for the "katulong" in preparing the meals for the farm. At harvest time the "katulong" would get 20 cavans of palay from the share that Ate Lorena and her husband would get from their work on this land.

Some of the women of KAMMI who are tenants or small owner-tillers also work as agricultural wage workers in other fields after they have planted their landlord's land or their own tiny land. They refer to this as "nagpapaupahan" (having oneself hired). This is one way by which women do all they can for survival of their families in their situation of poverty.

There is also a small group of "magsasaka" who may have a regular land to till which they have acquired through "kaingin" (clearing a tiny portion of wooded lands). Although they do not have a landlord to share their produce, their produce is often not enough for subsistence needs because their land is very small for adequate production or because the land lacks irrigation since often times they clear upland areas. Their position is also very precarious because they have no title to the land, that they can be categorized into what some literature refer to as the "near landless" peasants.

There is, therefore, awareness among the peasant women of KAMMI and others as well about the structure of landownership in Mindoro and the class formation that develops from it. That they have developed a language for it shows that political perspective and the social context of people's lives are joined (Scott 1985). As well, it shows that people native

to the situation have their own discourse about hierarchy and class relations in which they live.[1] Their own views and conceptualizations is also theory and indicates that ordinary people can also theorize. It influences the articulation of their organizational goals as well as their support for action that attempts at correcting this inequality. For example, "land to the tiller" is a critical issue for peasant men and women, and KMP and KAMMI have made attempts to change structures of land ownership and control towards the achievement of this vision. In the following sections I discuss the forms of resistances against land concentration and forms of agrarian reforms KAMMI and KMP have attempted.

"Kaingin" As An Individual Form of Resistance Against Landlessness

Kaingin can be considered as an individual informal form of resistance to landlessness. "Kaingin" is an old way of cultivating land by clearing a portion of a forest land, wooded or grassy area and use it for farming. The government has laws regulating kaingin especially on government lands. But there are peasants who in their desperate need for land resort to "kaingin". Three of the women of KAMMI that I have talked to (Ate Wona, Ate Lalay, and Teka), say that they did "kaingin" since they did not have any land on which they could produce food they could eat. Food and land therefore go together as basic needs of poor peasants. No land on which

to farm means no food. Poor peasants therefore must seek out for land, for their lives depend on land. Implicit in the act of those who did "kaingin" is the concept of property rights, that the peasant has a right to use land that could be made useful for production of food with or without state legitimation. Having put his/her own labor on clearing the land to make it suitable for production, the peasant feels personal attachment to that land and may resist possible loss of it. For example, Ate Sela, who plants rice on the land she acquired by "kaingin", said:

> "When the military told us to evacuate the area where we live, I told them that we would not leave because we were the ones who cleared the land, why should we leave. All the other people who were living there already left. We are the only ones left behind".

The concept implicit in this informal individual acts of resistance to landlessness and hunger is not entirely unrelated to the concept behind the formalized, collectivized organized occupation of idle lands that KAMMI and other peasant organizations are doing to change the unequal structure of land ownership and control in Mindoro. I discuss this in the following section.

Land Occupation as a Collective Grassroots Alternative for Land Reform

In the midst of the government's failure to implement effective and true agrarian reform, KMP and KAMMI has attempted a radical indigeneous alternative way of implementing land and agrarian reforms in Mindoro -- land

occupation. Land occupation is the process of collectively occupying idle lands ("lupang tiwangwang") and making them productive. These idle lands are usually owned by absentee landlords or by corporations who have not made these lands productive. It was in Mindoro where the first land occupation was tried and later replicated in other regions in the Philippines, such as Laguna and Negros.[2]

The history of land occupation in Mindoro, originally led by KMP and now being initiated by KAMMI, is actually a radical attempt at making land immediately accessible to landless tillers.[3] It is an indigeneous way of implementing land redistribution. But it has been met with violent resistance from the those in power, as I will describe in the following sections.

The land occupation in Sablayan. The first land occupation in Mindoro took place in Sablayan in 1984 when a KMP chapter was organized there. PLDT has large tracts of land, a huge portion of which were idle. The KMP local chapter in Sablayan occupied about 150 hectares of these lands. Collectively they entered the land simultaneously. Collective simultaneous entry of peasants into these idle lands apparently is the usual modus operandi in land occupation, as a way to build organized power.

The peasants made the land productive and they were at least able to benefit from the first harvest. However, this benefit did not last long, since the military harassed the

peasants. There were those who surrendered, while there were also those who sold their land. There were those who went back to the "gubat' (forest land). As a result the size of the land that is not being made productive is even larger. However, there were peasants who persisted in remaining in the occupied land despite the military harassment. Ate Ara attributes their persistence to their having strong principles ("matatag na prinsipyo"). The persistence of those who remained in this first land occupation apparently paved the way for other land occupations to follow.

The AQUAFIL land occupation. AQUAFIL (Aqua Culture Filipinas) is a corporate farm on a 1,822 hectares of land area in San Jose, Mindoro for the raising of prawns for export to Japan and for production of salt. It is owned by Alfonso Lim, a crony of former President Ferdinand Marcos. An absentee landlord, Alfonso Lim is from another province, Cagayan, in the northern part of the Philippines. He has a business partner in San Jose, Mindoro, a certain Ortigas family.

AQUAFIL uses for prawn and salt production less than 20 hectares of the land, leaving a good portion of it idle, now for 15 years. The originally organized peasant members of KMP thought of making the idle land productive. They sent a petition letter to President Cory Aquino to grant them the land to make it productive. There was a call from Cory Aquino that time that lands acquired through deception during the Marcos administration would be given to peasants. When the

peasants did not get any response from Cory Aquino, they decided to occupy the idle land.

On May 21, 1986, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon 500 peasants en masse marched to and entered AQUAFIL. They were blocked by the AQUAFIL security guards along with some PC (Philippine Constabulary) men as military reinforcement. The guards gave out one gun shot directed upwards. But the peasants did not retreat. Instead, with the sound of the gun shot, they all ran into the farm. When they were already inside, the manager of AQUAFIL came. The peasants negotiated if they could be allowed to make the land productive.

Now, the 500 peasant families occupied the land. At the start it was the male peasants who first settled in the area. They built "kubo-kubo" (huts) in the area. Then after about a month their families settled with them. They brought in their farm animals, chickens, pigs, and dogs.

By September, the peasants were able to plant rice on the idle lands. They worked hard to plow the land because it became very hard from being idle for many years. It was not enough to simply use the carabao (a farming buffalo) to prepare the land for planting. Though it was not easy, they persisted to make it productive. They tried using tractors.

Different non-peasant sectors supported this land occupation. Nuns, professionals, mostly teachers, and some government employees such as in the Department of Social Welfare contributed to raise the funds needed by the

peasants to make the land productive. After 5 months the peasants got their first harvest!

But there was a "counter-attack" from the military. They talked to the jeepney drivers and operators that they must not give a ride to the members of KMP or to the "petisyoneros" (petitioners), the 500 peasant families who petitioned to President Aquino for the AQUAFIL land. They also did strafing in the evening together with the AQUAFIL security guards. AQUAFIL also paid the Commanding Officer to harass the farmers. AQUAFIL management filed a case in court accusing the peasants of "trespassing" and "malicious mischief". There were some who were imprisoned. One of them was already very old, and another was even a deaf mute. But the peasants persisted.

They also harnessed a local farm fish, called "hito", that they could catch around AQUAFIL. If they caught small "hito" they would raise them until they were big enough for sale in the market. If they caught big ones they would immediately sell them in the market. They would walk 15 kilometers just to sell the fish in the town ("bayan"). After they were able to sell their fish, they would go back to the occupied land already bringing home food for their families.

After the first harvest, during the next cropping season, the peasants planted again rice. But AQUAFIL management sabotaged the farm by constructing a canal and pumped salt water into the rice fields that killed the sprouting rice

stalks. Those rice fields that were not reached by the salt water, the management burned. One KMP leader and some "petisyoneros" were "salvaged" (a colloquial term for extra-judicial executions). They also forcibly dismantled the peasants' huts. They cut the posts of their "kubo-kubo". They threw away their household things. One peasant woman even had a miscarriage.

Because this military/management harassment and "counter-attack" began to take its toll and was getting too difficult to bear, the "petisyoneros" were forced to surrender. Gradually, one by one, they left the once-idle-land that they earnestly made productive. Once again militarization, which actually is the repression of change, is the major factor that aborted the life that the peasants began to nurture in the occupied land. While AQUAFIL had access to the repressive military, the peasants had neither arms or legal support from the government in their radical attempt at transforming the structure of land ownership in Mindoro and the resulting poverty and hunger among the landless peasants.

The land occupation in Rizal. In 1987, the local chapter of KMP in Rizal also occupied idle rice lands owned by a landlord who has a headquarter for the CAFGUS, the present paramilitary troops created during the Aquino government similar to the vigilantes or Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF) during the Marcos military regime. This landlord has large tracts of unproductive rice lands. In 1987 KMP occupied

it. About 50 tenants also entered the land all at the same time. They negotiated with the landlord if they could farm the land since it has been idle ("katiwangwang"). However, the landlord determined that the peasants pay tax, 70-30 system. The peasants accepted his term so they could produce on the land. The following year the peasants negotiated with the landlord to decrease the tax, to 25-75 system, with 75% of the harvest going to the peasants. The landlord refused and resorted to harassment. He used the CAFGUS, paramilitary troops, who were at his disposal. The CAFGUS extra-legally arrested some of the peasants. They also took the peasants' belongings, their pigs and chickens. Having driven the peasants away, the CAFGUS are now the ones farming the farmlands. They were now the ones who took and benefitted from the harvest that the peasants planted. They also got the peasants' carabaos, but claimed that it was the NPA (New People's Army) who did it. At this time, there are no more tenants there, it is now CAFGUS who are farming the land. The triumph of the landlord's power in this case, however, did not bring the end of land occupation in Mindoro.

The land occupation in Magsaysay. In 1987, in one village in Magsaysay another land occupation took place. A KMP local chapter there, of about 20 members, occupied an unproductive land of about 8 hectares owned by an absentee-landlord. They cleaned the land and made it productive by planting rice. Part of the land is a fishpond. About 4 peasant

families work on this pond. The land-owner filed the case in court. However, after two years of due process, the peasants won the case and the Land Bank took custody of the land -- in which case, beginning 1989, the peasants would be paying amortization for the land to the Land Bank. Up to this time, the peasants are still there. The peasants' position, however, is precarious because if they fail to pay the amortization to the Land Bank because of poverty, the land can be taken away from them, as stated in CARL (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law) of the Aquino government. That is why within the context of the poverty of the majority of the peasantry, the development ideology of national KMP is "free land to the tiller", since this is going to take the burden of land reform from the burden of the poor landless peasants who may not even have enough income to pay the amortization. In the perspective of KMP, "free land to the tiller" means the government must subsidize land reform and not burden the peasants since they have already been long exploited. This perspective is based on the peasants' experience with past land reforms which failed because poor peasants could not afford amortization for the land.

The land occupation in Mamburao. The land occupation case in Mamburao, also in 1987, indicate that the concept of "land occupation" initiated by KMP was gaining acceptance to landless tenants who were not necessarily members of KMP. An absentee landlord, perceived as "despotic" by KMP members,

owns about 34 hectares of land where originally there were tenants but some he sent away. An administrator manages the land for him, while he lives outside Mindoro and visits the area only once in a while. The tenants who were sent away from farming the land thought of land occupation, but they thought that they did not have enough force to have the capacity to do it. So they approached KMP to help them by way of letting some KMP members join them during the occupation. Eventually the tenants became members of KMP. But in occupying the land, KMP's name was not placed at the forefront, that this was a land occupation by the tenants, although to increase the tenants' force some KMP members joined the land occupation. That the peasants wanted it to be perceived as an occupation of the tenants was a legal strategy, since in the law tenants have the legal right to eventual ownership of the land.

However, as a form of counter-resistance, the landlord used his private army to burn the houses of the peasants and imprisoned 10 of them. He also brought the case to court. But the peasants found ways to assert their rights legally. Using as justification the provisions of CARL (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law) the peasants for almost a year made negotiations with the landlord on their rights to the land. At the time of my fieldwork, the landlord was then agreeable to transferring the ownership of land to the peasants. They did some measuring of the land, and apparently there were no

indications of counter-resistance from the landlord.

The case in Calintaan: An attempt to confront the power of the Governor. Governor Medalla of Mindoro is a "panginoong may-lupa" who owns large tracts of rice land in Calintaan, other than in other parts of Mindoro. Ate Feliza calls him a "despotic landlord". In asserting their claim for their right to land ownership, the tenants who were working on his land used the strategy of "persistent negotiation" ("panay na pakikipagnegosasyon") with the Governor. Since election time is usually the time when political candidates are generous, just before election the peasants held a meeting ("talakayan") with the Governor. In this meeting the governor promised the tenants eventual ownership of the land they till (this is in fact stipulated in the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) of the Aquino government). However, after election, the tenants claim that upon knowing that he lost in that particular area, the Governor drove the tenants away from the land. His private army composed of some CAFGUS (a government paramilitary troop) and some ordinary civilians harassed the peasants. So to this day the Governor has not really yet transferred ownership of the land to the tenants and in fact by sending the tenants away from the land, he has circumvented CARL. He has instead allowed the CAFGUS (whom he told to enter his land and harass the tenants) to farm his lands. According to Ate Feliza more than 50 peasants could benefit the land if the Governor complies with the negotiations of the

peasants, but as of now the prospects are dim. Having both political and economic power, the governor then is able not only to control the critical resource of land but also the military machinery to resist change in the structure of landownership in Mindoro from which he benefits more than the peasants do. Having political power, he is also able to circumvent the land reform law of the government, which in the first place is already biased to the landlords with its provision of voluntary implementation on the part of the landlords.

In the midst of stringent power relations in which the peasants live, land occupation becomes a radical, although risky, alternative to landlessness and the poverty that result from it. Organized occupation becomes the peasants' weapon against the militarized counter-resistance of landlords against demands of peasants for land reforms. Land occupation, in the last analysis, becomes a form of political class struggle between the landless peasants and wealthy landlords. Peasants' action towards land occupation is an organized articulation of their slogans, "land to the tiller" and "Uphold genuine land reform" ("Itaguyod ang tunay na reforma sa lupa"). Although illegitimized by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) of the Aquino government, land occupation is actually a strategy of agrarian reform from below. It is an assertion of the poor peasants' claim to have a voice in development policies affecting them.

As well, it indicates that ordinary people have a political will to change power relations that subordinate them, independent from the official definition of what is a legitimate change action. This supports the findings of Kerkvliet (1990) and Scott (1985) that subordinated people do not always accept the dominant classes' claims and definition of social reality, even in the absence of open violent resistance.

KAMMI's Initiative on Land Occupation

Despite the harassment of the KMP in 1987 in its land occupations, KAMMI recently took on its initiative on land occupation as a strategy towards its ultimate goal of working towards true agrarian reforms in Mindoro. At the time of my fieldwork in Mindoro (Summer 1989), Ate Ara, Ate Lorena, and Cristina mentioned the plan for land occupation in Mamburao. In May 1990, while writing this report, I received a letter from Lily, a researcher in Mindoro along with a documentation of the land occupations in Mamburao.[4]

In 1989 two land occupations took place in Mamburao where KAMMI played a significant role in contrast to the previous land occupations (such as in 1987) where KMP took the leading role. These land occupations were the occupation of the Odlen Country Farms, Inc. (OCFI) which took place in September 1989, and the occupation of a large idle land in Mamburao, which took place on October 20, 1989. I discuss these land

occupations in the following.

The OCFI land occupation. The OFCI land occupation was a peasants' grassroot attempt to redistribute ill-gotten wealth acquired during the Marcos regime. Ilegally acquired from the original ownership of Ricardo "Ding" Quintos by Armando T. Romualdez, a brother of the former First Lady Imelda Marcos, the OCFI lands of approximately 500 hectares is a corporate land used for the production of rice, mango, poultry, and fish. When Corazon Aquino was elected president, the Presidential Commission on Good Government confiscated the land as "ill-gotten wealth". However, despite the legislation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, the government planned to sell the land to private individuals instead of redistributing it to landless peasants. Charging the Aquino government with inconsistenccy, KAMMI, working with KAMIPCI (Kanlurang Mindoro Peasants' Cooperative, Inc.) occupied OCFI. They mobilized a group of 103 peasants, 15 of whom were KAMMI members, to occupy the rice lands ("palayan"), mango plantation ("manggahan"), and the poultry-raising farm ("manukan"). They made the "manggahan" communal and the rest they parcelled out to the members. About 20 peasants are working on the "manggahan", 15 of whom are women. They have been able to let the mango trees bear fruits and they have already earned 11,600 pesos from their first harvest. They decided not to put up the poultry-raising farm since there were no more chicks, instead they just cultivated the land to

make it productive. They also began cleaning the fishery ("palaisdaan") which had been unproductive. Not all the lands of OCFI were occupied by KAMIPCI and KAMMI because some of the area, which are rice lands, have already been occupied by FFF (Federation of Free Farmers) since 1986. FFF is also a non-governmental organization of peasants who, like KMP, also demands for genuine agrarian reforms and the redistribution of land to the tillers. OCFI land occupation thus, brought together different peasant organizations in Mindoro. Implicit in this action is the ideology of development that peasants who are tillers, regardless of their organizational affiliation, have a basic right to access to land. This is in fact a resistance against the accumulation of land and its wealth by those who do not till the land.

The presence of the military in the area, however, limited the peasants' claim to the land. Some members of the military grabbed from the peasants about 9 hectares of the manggo plantation containing about 400 manggo trees from the 1,800 trees that KAMIPCI and KAMMI was able to occupy. They came down to the area twice and forcibly tried sending the peasants away. They destroyed at least one of the huts ("kubo") of the peasants in the occupied area. But the peasants, particularly the women, resisted the military by not leaving the land.

The success of the OCFI occupation seem apparent as the PARCOM (Presidential Agrarian Reform Commission) gave out an

order to OCFI that gives protection to the "peasants (only) who have already occupied the land since September 1989". Although this illegalizes the presence of the military in OCFI, they have retained their occupation of the aforementioned land. Their continued military presence in the occupied area, makes the position of the peasants precarious. This raises the issue that economic agrarian reforms through legislation cannot be isolated from de-militarization of the country-side. Economic and political democratization must go together.

The land occupation in Mamburao: The landless peasant women's and youth's claim. In a village in Mamburao, there are many large tracts of land that are idle and unproductive. There is for example about 1,000 hectares of unproductive land claimed to be owned by only 5 families. From the perspective of the members of KAMMI who occupied the land, the claim to ownership of the land by the 5 families is not legal since there is no written documentation to their claim. It came out that these lands were forest land and government-owned.

Thirty-seven landless women of KAMMI took the initiative to occupy 110 hectares of these idle lands. Twenty-five peasant women from the local chapter in Sablayan and 12 peasant women from Mamburao joined forces to occupy the land. They also allowed 18 from the youth sector ("kabataan") to join the occupation. In a short time they were able to clean 6 hectares, 3 hectares of which they have made into a communal

farm. In less than half of the communal farm they have been able to plant corn. The "petisyoneros" (as those who occupy the land call themselves), comprising of women and youth, came up with by-laws in which they stated that each member (there are 55 of them) will be entitled to two hectares of the 110 hectares occupied land. Indicated here is a sense of equity in the access to land -- an immediate concretization of their concept of true agrarian reform.

The Mamburao occupation, although was not met with immediate harassment from the military, was not entirely spared from some problems. One problem was the lack of production capital for continued full utilization of the land, which puts the women in a situation wherein they have to stop work on the occupied land in order to look first for other means of income. The women, however, planned to get back to work collectively on the occupied land on February 25, 1990. Land occupation, thus also brings in the issue of access to other resources necessary for production -- access to financial resources to meet production inputs, which the women because they are poor do not have. This problem provides a rationale for AMIHAN's concept of genuine agrarian reforms as consisting not simply of land redistribution, but including other issues, such as government subsidy on food production and peasant women's organization for self-reliance.

Conclusion. KAMMI initiated land occupation not only because now it is a women's organization distinct and

separated from KMP, but also because KAMMI sees land occupation as relevant to its ultimate goal of working towards genuine land reform ("tunay na reforma sa lupa"). It is a rational act, arising from their own definition of who has the basic right to ownership and control of land as a critical means of agricultural production. Their being women does not prevent them from initiating land occupation which was largely led by KMP previous to its harassment. In their perspective, they too have a claim to leadership in the peasant movement and that they cannot be simply dependent on the leadership of peasant men in maintaining the persistence of the struggle. Ate Ara, for example, eloquently articulates this:

> Now that the men are not able to lead in land occupation because of harassment, we the women will now be the one to be at the forefront of the struggle.

In its recent provincial convention (March 6-8, 1990), KAMMI also collectively made the resolution to intensify the land occupation in Mamburao as a peasant women's initiative towards agrarian reform (Lily, letter to me, 6 April 1990).

Land occupation as an action strategy also becomes the context in which KAMMI forms alliances with other peasant groups and with other sectors of the peasantry such as the youth sector. Inter-alliances and intra-alliances do take place within the context of action that is as concrete as land occupation that can bring immediate access to land. Despite the risk of military harassment, land occupation is becoming

an indigenous grassroot initiative on restructuring the control and ownership of land in Mindoro and is gaining acceptance among the landless peasantry who see themselves as having the right to own land as well as the responsibility to make idle lands productive.

Indigenous Collective Forms of Work: Safeguard Against the Tendency for Labor Exploitation

In Mindoro, some peasants have the local practice of doing farm work in some collective ways. One form is the "suyuan". "Suyuan" is the practice among peasants to pool their labor together for efficiency. This is done this way: Peasants who have lands to till, usually as tenants, work together at the same time on one plot that is under the care of one of the members of the "suyuan". Since many do the work, they usually finish whatever they need to do in shorter time. Then they do the work for the next plot of another member in the "suyuan". They follow this pattern until everyone of the members in the "suyuan" has his/her plot worked on.

However, concentration of land and the growth in inequality shifts the impact of older forms of labor and gives the advantage to the wealthier. This is for example, indicated by Ate Ara's critical stance on "suyuan":

> Suyuan appears to be good, but it has the possibility of it being exploited by others. Some join the organization because of the "suyuan". Others have bigger plots to work on, some have 1 hectare, others may have 3 to 5 hectares. The one with only 1 hectare to work on is shortchanged ("lugi").

The capitalist exploitative norms of labor, that interlocks into existing feudal relations of production, also provides a context for some landlords to exploit "suyuan" to their advantage by not hiring waged agricultural workers even if the amount of work needs hiring more workers. The experience of Mely, a 20 year-old peasant woman, who is involved in "suyuan" in Calintaan, is one example. She said that the landlord of the land that they were working on that day refused many of the 60 agricultural workers who asked to be hired ("gusto magpaupahan") because he preferred the "suyuan". While "suyuan" is primarily an indigenous collectivization of the tenants' labor that they find efficient, landlords can exploit it if they have a bigger plot and refuse to hire wage agricultural workers and depend on the "suyuan" to supplement the extra labor needed in their farms.

To control this possibility of exploiting the "suyuan" for the advantage of others rather than benefit equally the tenants who are involved in it, and the landlords' tendency to use it as a means to exploit the peasants' labor, the local chapter of KAMMI in Sablayan collectively dialogue about this situation. In this dialogue, they came up with a resolution to regulate their organization of "suyuan" in such a way that it will protect the interest of the peasants. They set up rules for their "suyuan" and incorporated this in the Constitution of their local chapter. Ate Ara explains:

> We controlled "suyuan". We have set up that only 1 hectare should be included in the "suyuan". What is

> beyond one hectare should be done by hired labor ("paupahan"). This way we do not take away jobs for the landless agricultural workers ("mga walang lupang masakahan"). That is why we put this in our constitution.

While Ate Ara, who is a provincial leader, has a critical perspective on the "suyuan" and her critical stance has resulted to a collective resistance by the Sablayan local chapter for safeguarding it against its possible exploitation by landlords, Mely, being a very new member in the local chapter of Calintaan has yet no critical view of "suyuan". In fact the other peasants with whom she works in the "suyuan" are not yet members of the Calintaan local chapter. This is a local problem that KAMMI has yet to address. How can a local chapter as well as the provincial and national federation allow new members to bring in and articulate their direct experience on agrarian relations and make it a context of collective consciousness-raising and organized resistance? It was, for example, raised in the National Council Meeting of AMIHAN (July 1989) that the focus and ultimate goal of the peasant women's organization is towards agrarian reforms. What are the details in the experience of peasant women that must be articulated and brought to awareness in conretizing this goal?

The critical stance of KAMMI's Sablayan chapter indicates that as peasant women get more politically organized, their critical consciousness and their capacity to sageguard collectively their class interest increases. This is their

weapon against the resistance of those who benefit from the existing relations of production to possibilties of change. The landlords' tendency to exploit existing indigenous collective forms of work among peasants and agricultural workers is a way to fragment their potential power as a class. Exploitation and fragmentation of peasants go hand in hand. KAMMI's local chapter in Sablayan, however, saw the subtle politics of this exploitation and fragmentation, and they responded collectively. Other local chapters, on the other hand, are yet in need of political awareness on this problem to confront it collectively head on.

The practice of "suyuan" and the peasants' attempt to protect it from exploitation also indicate resistance to capitalist penetration of indigeneous forms of collective work that serve as the basis of collective class consciousness. Hence, there are native local articulation of work relations that resist capitalist hegemony. This limits the explanatory adequacy of a Eurocentric classical Marxist tradition, that to move to socialism, capitalism in the Third World must first reach its highest stage in which extreme contradictions will create a context that is ripe for socialist transformation. Colonialism, the harbingger of capitalism, was considered a "necessary evil" (Blomstrom and Hettne 1984, 10). Such idea is based on a linear concept of development and fails to see the complex particularity and matrix of peasant experience in the Philippines, more so the experience of peasant women. It

fails to recognize local forms of communalism that withstood the penetration of colonialism and and capitalism and which can be harnessed more fully in the struggle for communal social justice in the neo-colonial period. "Suyuan" indicates that there are indigeneous forms of work relations in the peasant political economy that can become the basis or beginning point of class struggle and definition of resistance to underdevelopment or in the re-conceptualization of women in development from the perspective of Third World peasant women.

Initiative to Have a Say in Determining the Price of Agricultural Labor

Landless agricultural wage workers comprise a significant portion of the peasantry in Mindoro. Agricultural wage workers get paid very low and what they get is insufficient to meet adequate basic daily needs, such as food. When I went to the market for example in San Jose during my fieldwork, the price of fresh fish ranged between 20-35 pesos a kilo and the price of meat ranged between 40-45 pesos a kilo. But agricultural wage workers whom I came in contact were receiving a wage between 20 to 30 pesos a day, which was not even enough to buy a kilo of meat. That is why usually, they can afford only dried fish for viand, which is considered a poor man's diet in the Philippines. Ate Glin of Magsaysay, for example, who gets paid 30 pesos a day for doing agricultural work in a landlord's land says:

> What I earn is not even enough for one kilo of viand ("ulam"). One kilo of milk fish ("bangus") is 35 pesos, "sap-sap" is 15 pesos a kilo, "galunggong" is 20 pesos a kilo. Meat is 45 pesos a kilo.

Agricultural wage is low because generally peasants do not have a say in determining the price of their labor. Especially when they are unorganized, they have no bargaining power. And under the context of a large pool of landless peasants looking for work, they do not have much power in the wage market. Rural unemployment creates a context where peasants are more likely to accept low wage than have no income at all, especially when they are seasonal workers, as most of them are.

Keeping agricultural wage low is also a way to maintain the existing concentration of land among a few who do not till the land. While the existence of a large number of landless agricultural workers is a result of the existing structure of land ownership, keeping a mass of agricultural workers who could be paid low is one way to maintain such structure. And this is how the dual mode of feudal-capitalist relations of production in Philippine political-economy is reproduced at the village level.

Another form of collective action that KAMMI attempts to organize when the members are ready for it, is demanding for increase of agricultural wage. For example, one local chapter in Sablayan, comprising mostly of peasant women who are agricultural workers, did a campaign ("campanya") to increase the agricultural wage rate in Sablayan. Ate Ara explained:

> We did a campaign to increase the wage of peasants. In the baranggay formal meeting we presented that the wage for peasant women and men should be raised from 25 pesos to 30 pesos a day. In the case of "pakyawan", where 20 people work together, that it be raised from 650 pesos for a whole contracted work to 35 pesos a day. We based our negotiation on the fact that the price of one ganta of rice is already 18 pesos.

When a local chapter of KAMMI initiates demand for increase in agricultural wage and succeeds, there is what I call a trickle effect: the benefit trickles down even to those who are not members of the organization. This was for example the experience of a local chapter in Mamburao. Most of the members work as wage agricultural workers ("nagpapaupahan") when they are not working in the landlords' land since they are also tenants. They get paid only 20 pesos a day. Ate Norita, a local leader of this chapter, explains:

> In July 1989 about 20 members of the local chapter met and arrived at a collective decision to demand for an increase in agricultural wage. They decided that each of them should charge 30 pesos a day with meals to those rich landlords who do not till the land ("hindi nagbubunkal ng bukid"). The meals should include lunch ("tanghalian"), and snacks ("merienda") at 10 o'clock and at 3 o'clock. When landlords who hire them for the work ask how much they would charge for the work, they all said the same thing. Other women who are not members of the organization began charging 30 pesos when they learned that the wage rate ("ang upa") is already 30pesos. The women were happy.

The action also trickles down to the men. Ate Norita continues:

> I suggested also to the men that they should increase their charge from 50 pesos a day to 60 pesos a day. They get paid 50 pesos a day for plowing and tilling the soil with all the implements being provided by them, like the carabao.
>
> While the demand for wage increase may not be as radical

as "land occupation", it is in fact a form of struggle towards having a say in determining the price of their labor. While it is not directly confronting the structure of land ownership in Mindoro, demand for wage increase is actually a resistance to the exploitation of peasant labor by those who do not till the land. While land occupation directly confronts the feudal economy, demand for wage increase is a form of resistance to the capitalist penetration of Philippine agriculture. When seen in conjunction with the radical development concept behind land occupation, "land to the tiller", the demand for wage reforms is a step towards transforming the feudal-capitalist economy from the bottom, and from the experience and perspective of the peasantry. When peasants demand a share in determining the price of their labor they are in fact resisting the tendency of capitalist agriculture to commoditize their labor. What is implied here is that the transformation of Philippine political economy would involve the transformation of the feudalist relations of production while at the same time controlling capitalist relations that exploit human labor. To have a share in the fruits of such transformation however, peasant women must take an active role in the change process. And this is what KAMMI is attempting to do.

Resistance Against the Impact of Green Revolution

Experiment on the traditional rice hybrid. I have

mentioned earlier, that Green Revolution brought capitalist imperialism close to the farming village and had an impact on the peasants' work, increasing the costs of production of rice by replacing a traditional rice variety with one dependent on expensive agro-chemicals and less resistant to local pests and typhoons. Some of the peasant women have tried an alternative to the negative impact of Green Revolution. For example, a few of the women I talked to, 8 from the local chapter of Magsaysay and 3 from the local chapter in Calintaan, were experimenting on planting a rice variety which they say does not need a lot of fertilizers and pesticides to have good yield in contrast to the foreign high yielding variety (HYV) that is also known as the miracle rice. The women refer to this experimental variety as the "bagong binhi" (new seed), or the "traditional", or sometimes they call it "mataas na butil" (tall grain). According to Carlos, a technician in Mindoro, this variety was a result of an agricultural experiment of the University of the Philippines, Los Banos, to recover the displaced traditional rice variety. Since this variety has almost disappeared and very little supply could be found, they combined the local traditional variety and the foreign high yielding variety (HYV). If some of the women call this variety as the "traditional" or "tall grain", it may be appropriate since it looks like the pure traditional variety of which I am familiar. I have visited some of the women's field on which they have sown this variety and saw

that indeed it looks taller than the foreign miracle rice.

The women are interested in doing the experiment on this variety because they say they do not have to spend money on fertilizers. This way they do not have to borrow as much money from usurers and it would lessen the debts they have to pay at harvest time. For example, Ate Lorena says: "The traditional is better because we do not get into big debts". And Ate Susana points the major reason for high cost of production: "The old variety, V42, is costly on pesticides and fertilizers, that is why we tried the traditional this time". And Ate Morina further affirms: "The cost of production increased when they changed the traditional rice variety. I prefer the traditional. I am experiementing on this new variety without the use of fertilizers and pesticides".

The women acquired this experimental variety through some technicians in Mindoro who provide support for peasants, one of which is the promotion of and experimentation on appropriate technology. These technicians received first this variety from the University of the Philippines in 1988 and so it was during this year that some of the women began experimenting.

Since the supply of this experimental variety is limited, the woman who were interested in trying the variety, used first one to three kilos of the variety for sowing onto the fields. At harvest time they set aside twice that number so that they can increase the amount of seedlings and more

peasants can try the variety next planting season. They hope to repeat this pattern and cycle every planting and harvesting season so that those who were not able to try the variety because of the limited supply would have the opportunity to try.

The peasant women prefer this experimental variety. Those who heard about it were requesting for more, but the supply ran out. Ate Lorena, who was one of the first experimenters, was quite satisfied of the result. She said that the experimental variety can yield more. Having gained some experiential knowledge from her experiment, she suggested to the other women that they plant the shoots with some distance in between so that the rice grain can shoot out more freely, and that it should not just be sown randomly like the way they do with the miracle rice (HYV) since it would be wasteful. She suggested to some who were trying it for the first time to carefully plant the shoots apart so that there is enough room for them to grow and this way even if their supply is little they can plant on more areas. Thus, as the women take part in the experimentation on this variety, they gain technical expertise from experience which they share with others.

The women's willingness to experiment is a form of resistance against the consequences of the impact of the Green Revolution and a constructive response to the search for alternatives towards indigenizing agricultural development in

the Philippines, making it more suitable to local conditions. That the women are able to do this within the politics of KAMMI provides an alternative to the way the government program, Masagana 99 has been implemented. It was through this local government program that the Green Revolution was facilitated. In the Masagana 99, the peasants had no chance to keep the traditional rice variety since it was part of the program to propagate the foreign hybrid. Subsidy to peasants came in the form of fertilizers and pesticides as this variety is dependent on agro-chemicals. The peasants eventually discovered that this was not to their best advantage.

Alternative knowledge: Harnessing local resources as pesticides. Ate Lalay, one of the provincial leaders of KAMMI, deliberately does not use fertilizer and pesticides. To drive away farm pests she uses a local resource. She extracts the sap from the leaves of local shrubs called "kakawati" and spreads it over her fields which she has acquired through "kaingin". Sometimes she plants the shrub around her field. She says the pests do not like the smell of the "kakawati" sap so they keep away from her farm. Ate Lalay also deliberately refrained from using fertilizers. In one of our evening conversations ("kwentohan sa gabi"), she said that although she received 2 sacks of fertilizers from the local government for free, "I would not use them, instead I will sell them". Ate Gansa gave a rejoinder, "When a fertilizer is not suitable to the soil it will destroy it",

while a male peasant, a relative of Ate Gansa, complained: "These fertilizers, they are pests!".

Ate Lalay's indigeneous attempt to use local resources to control farm pests is more of an individual informal resistance. There is yet no systematic collective organized program within KAMMI to harness this local resource and develop it as an alternative to chemicalized pesticides that are harmful for the health of the peasants and consumers of rice. However, this individual informal resistance is quite significant when seen within the context of total government inaction on harnessing local resources in favor of providing and creating a market for the agro-chemical products of multinational corporations. Because agricultural development in the Philippines is very much controlled by transnational corporations, the government neglects the harnessing of local resources such as non-chemicalized, natural forms of pesticides that may be less costly. Ate Lalay's alternative knowledge shows that there are other methods of food production that can be developed other than dependency on health-hazardous and ecologically damaging agro-chemicals.

Alternative Health Care

In the villages, where the women live, there is inadequate professional health care system. According to a health worker in Calintaan, she met an 86 year-old woman in the village who has never seen a doctor all her life.

Generally there is no facilities for emergency cases that can provide the village people with immediate medical care. In cases where the village is remote and transportation is difficult, the people generally do not get the necessary immediate medical attention. The government has not really paid much attention to this human and social need in the rural areas, especially in the barrios. The few public hospitals are located sometimes in towns and mostly in cities, but these health facilities are usually understaffed, lacking in modern facilities, and overcrowded. There are private hospitals who may have better facilities, but the poor cannot afford to pay for their expensive services. While I saw military headquaters in the places I visited in Mindoro, I did not see any public clinic set up by the government in those places, except in the town of Magsaysay where there was a family planning clinic that put up a signboard saying it gives free vasectomy and a poster which said, "Magplano ng Pamilya Para Masagana" (Do Family Planning In Order to Progress).

Medicines in the Philippines are also very expensive since most of them are imported. Even medicines that do not need prescription and can be bought over the counter are expensive. The poor, who do not even have adequate income to buy enough food to put daily on their table, hardly are able to buy the medicines needed that can prevent common sickness, such as flu or diarrhea, from developing into complications. Ate Lorena for example talked about the story of a poor

peasant (who asked to be a "katulong" in the farm they till) whose wife died from flu within a few weeks after she gave a natural birth to a baby. Although the transnational phamaceutical industries find a good outlet for its products in Philippine market, their products are beyond the reach of many among the poor class, especially in the rural areas.

In response to this inadequacy of health care in the villages, KAMMI undertakes health training. One of the things they do is how to prepare herbal medicines using local herbs or medicinal plants. Some of these plants are just growing around the village and they can be raised or planted in the yard. The women refer to the preparation of herbal medicines as "pagluto ng gamot", literally translated as "cooking of medicine".

One of the herbal medicines that the women have found effective is the "makabuhay". "Makabuhay" is a medicinal plant that could be found in the village. The women would cook the leaves of this plant from which ointment is produced that could be used to cure skin itch by applying it externally on the affected area. The women usually preserve the "makabuhay ointment" in small bottles or in plastic containers or wrappers. I have used this "makabuhay ointment" myself and it relieved the itchiness I got from insect bites, like mosquitos. Some of those who provide the technical training in herbal medicine for the members of KAMMI, say that they prefer to use the "makabuhay oitment" because it does not

leave a blemish on the skin like some strong medicines sold in drug stores. Although they say the cure may take for sometime, from their experience the result is better because "makabuhay oitment" does not have anti-biotics that can weaken the skin resistance to other diseases. I saw the women also use "makabuhay ointment" for skin rushes of their babies or young children. Since they say "makabuhay ointment" is not that strong like some drugs, it is safe to use it on tender skin. Especially in the villages where minor skin diseases are common, the harnessing of this local resource has become very useful.

Another medicinal plant available in the village is what the women call "tsang gubat" (literally translated as "forest tea") which can be found growing in the woods. It can also be planted around the house. "Tsang gubat", according to the women, is good in curing diarrhea. I have tried it myself and I found it effective. The women prepare "tsang gubat" for medicinal purposes by drying the leaves including the twigs of the plant. Then they wrap them in smaller quantities in plastic bags so that they could be distributed for consumption by other people. The dried leaves and twigs are boiled in water to make hot tea. To cure a diarrhea it can be taken at least three times a day. "Tsang gubat" can also be used as a regular tea drink, similar to herbal teas.

There are many medicinal plants that the women know of that are available in their villages. Some Filipino

professional doctors who are trained in Western medicine do not even know about these local herbal medicines. For example, a doctor who lives in San Jose, an urban sector of Mindoro, did not know about these local herbal medicines when I mentioned to her about it. Although she is from Mindoro, she has never been to the villages there, so she does not know what exactly is village life there. The medicines she prescribes to her patients are of course Western made medicine that are expensive, often times beyond the reach of poor village people.

Although, there are limitations to herbal medicine since there are diseases that can not simply be cured by it and would require professional expertise, some of the women I talked to found their training in herbal medicine helpful and useful. One of them for example says:

> This herbal medicine, it really helps solve the problems of the mothers. Since we began cooking herbal medicine we do not anymore often go to a doctor since it is anyway effective.

In the context where the Philippines becomes a market for medical products restricted in western countries, such as the U.S., KAMMI's harnessing of local medicinal plants is in fact a resistance against dependency on Western medicine or medical technology. As well it is a practical alternative to government neglect on providing minimum medical services in the villages.

Yet, within the political context in which this collective activity takes place, one of the constraints the

women experience is suspicion and labelling from the repressive government. Since the military is suspicious of any group of people gathering together and holding meetings, even this health project is suspected. And rightly so, since the politicization of health is an important aspect of the peasants' situation. Ate Jo of the local chapter of Magsaysay says, "Like our cooking of medicine ("pagluto ng gamot") they suspect that we might be supporting the New People's Army with it". Since one of the strategies of counter-insurgency in the Philippines is to paralyze the New People's Army by cutting and undermining all civilian support to it, the military's suspicion that "cooking medicine" in the village may provide medical support to the New People's Army is a deliberate form of repression. For KAMMI, however, learning about herbal medicine and spreading its knowledge to as many people in the village is a positive response to the village people's immediate need for health care that is within their means.

In Calintaan, some of the members of the local chapter of KAMMI contributed significantly in setting up a Health Center in their village, in coordination with community health workers who provide community health education in Calintaan. Ate Gansa says:

> If we are going to think about it, I was the one who really sweat in putting up that Center. I would walk, go to each of the people just to make sure we would be able to set up the Center.

The Center has become a place where the village people can gather around to learn and prepare herbal medicine,

organize training sessions on dental care, or get medicines for ordinary sicknesses that do not need immediate hospitalization. Some of the women who have already completed the health training course participate in taking turns in attending to the Center, to see to it that there is someone there in case anyone in the village comes for help. All these activities provide an opportunity for the women to acquire skills and develop confidence.

The Health Center is all made of unpainted wood, a symbol of the desire of those involved in it to come together and work collectively to respond to their common needs in the village. Yet, this Center has not been spared from a form of violence that can result from a situation where there is the presence of the members of the paramilitary who can become abusive when drunk. On the door of this Center are stone marks that resulted from the stoning by the barrio captain's son, Mario, who is a CAFGU. Cristina, who slept at the Center on the night this happened, explains:

> It was in the middle of the night. We heard someone shouting, "Labas kayo diyan! Labas kayo diyan!" [Get out from there! Get out from there!]. My companion and I did not do anything. Then later, we heard the door being stoned. I did not go out. But the 13-year old son of Ate Lalay, Antonio, who would usually sleep at the Center to keep it guarded at night, went out to see what was going on. Mario, who was drunk, hit him. Since then Antonio would not sleep in the Center again. This happened on the night before the inauguration day of the Center.

The people nonetheless continue to use the Center. Health training continues to be held there. However, military

suspicion about non-governmental activities has also constrained some men to attend these trainings. Ate Gansa and Teka said that there was a male peasant who was attending one of these trainings. "Because he was the only male in the group he was suspected to be helping the New People's Army with his health training, so he was called for questioning in the headquarter". Thus, in a repressive society even non-political activities, such as health care training, can become suspicious to the military, and the continuance of such activities, therefore, become a form of political resistance. The poor must risk military suspicion in order to survive or attend to their health.

Resistance Against the Privatization and Traders' Dominant Control of Rice Marketing

In the previous chapter on the everyday lives of the peasant women, I talked about the control of rice marketing in Mindoro as increasingly getting concentrated among private traders and its impact on the peasant women's everyday lives. The National Food Authority (NFA), which was created by the government to bring in state control on the procurement and marketing of rice as a way to stabilize the price of rice, in fact has very little control. The increasing dominant control of private traders on rice marketing has actually undermined the purpose for which the NFA was created. In the context of a political economy that is based on the ideology of free enterprise and private investment and where most big traders

are also politically powerful, there has been no serious government regulation or restrictions on the economic power of the private traders in the market. In fact, while before 1986 the NFA had the authority to regulate the pricing of rice traders (for example, that traders could not procure rice above the pricing of NFA), beginning October 1986 there has been a de-regulation of the pricing of rice traders. Thus, NFA lost its police control on pricing. One of the immediate consequences of this de-regulation, expectedly, was the escalation of the price of rice. Being a staple food of every Filipino family, the increase in the price of rice, of course, benefitted the traders but hurt the poor most.

Other than an increase in the price of rice, another consequence of the concentration of control of rice marketing among private traders is the depletion of rice supply in the local market. The traders in Mindoro, for example, prefer to sell their stocks of rice outside the village where rice is produced because they can sell it at higher price if they sell them to non-rice-producing regions. The poor village people, who may not have the means to pay the transportation to buy rice in the urban area, are most affected when shortage of rice in the village market is created because local small traders are piling up stocks of rice for a market outside the village or outside the province of Mindoro.

Both under the NFA and the dominance of the traders, the poor local peasantry, who are the direct producers of rice,

This power relations in the market again create another precondition for organized resistance. For example, KAMMI's village local chapter in Calintaan attempted at claiming some control in the marketing of rice in their village. As opposed to privatized marketing of rice, the women thought of setting up a cooperative as their first collective project during their revival and re-organization phase. On June 27, 1989 after the 3-day leadership training that this local chapter organized, the women conferred each other and decided to set a date for a meeting wherein they could discuss what project they would like to have. They set the date for June 29, 1989 at 2 p.m. The newly elected president, Ate Beni who is also a new member, notified the other members about the date and time for the meeting. About 15-18 members came. In this meeting, the group thought of organizing a cooperative as their first collective project. They thought of buying and selling rice and other goods they could sell.

To even begin their collective project, the women knew that what they needed was capital. So they also wrote a letter (which the women call "resolusyon") to Mindoro Institute for Development asking for starting capital. Their letter contained the rationale for their request for starting capital: a) to be able to buy and sell rice and in the village since that is what they "need most" ("unang pangangailangan"); b) to be able to start their consumer cooperative project to help themselves and their organization in their poverty. The

women expressed their intent to make this initial project succeed so that they could expand their buying and selling capacity to include unmilled rice ("palay"). Palay is also important for the peasant women since they need it as seedlings for sowing. Sometimes the women have to borrow palay for sowing ("binhi") because often times what they have set aside are used up when their share from the harvest are already consumed way before next planting season.

This initial activity formalized what the women already expressed informally before this June 29 meeting. For example, in my earlier conversations with the women, Ate Gansa, Ate Beni, and Teka had mentioned that it is very difficult for them to find rice as well as other goods they could buy in their village. Ate Beni said that the Capitan who has a store in their barrio would simply not sell rice although he has sacks of rice that he ships to Batangas (a neighboring non-rice producing province) where he originally comes from. Teka mentioned that since transportation from Calintaan to San Jose (an urban area) is very expensive or even just going to the market in the town area already costs them money, a cooperative in their village would be really useful. Ate Gansa likewise mentioned that sometimes nowhere could they find rice to buy in the village when they need it. In another occasion, in the group work sessions during the local leadership training of this local chapter, the women also informally brought out that they would like to put up a

cooperative project where they could sell rice and other goods they usually need without having to travel to the town, thus saving from transportation expenses. Moreover, they mentioned that "rice is a need of the poor" ("kailangan ng mga mahihirap") and that the cooperative project they would like to set up is "for the good of the organization" ("para sa kapakanan ng samahan"). The collective and class consciousness that is indicated in these articulations is important to note. It shows that the women's attempt to have some degree of control in the relations of the market that affect the marketing of rice in the village is one that deviates from the individualist capitalist principles. Although they are talking about the need for a "starting capital" ("puhunan"), they are not viewing it as funds owned by someone and its profits to be owned by that someone, but rather as collective common property for the good of the members of the organization to help them in their poverty and to respond to the needs of the poor in the community. Their view stands in contrast to the principles that private traders follow -- to sell rice wherever and in whatever manner they could get the most profits.

This attempt of the local chapter in Calintaan to set up a consumer cooperative to have some control in the marketing of rice in the village, has an historical precedence in the life of the peasant movement in Mindoro. It was part of the program of KMP in Mindoro to set up cooperatives where the

peasants could think alternative collective modes of economic relations that will allow them to have some control of their own produce in the relations of the market. An example was the aborted attempt to set up a warehouse and rice mill by the members of KMP in Magsaysay. Militarization aborted this project. Another precedence is the fact that some of the women who are now members of this newly organized local chapter in Calintaan also had been part of some local village chapters of KMP whose plan for consumer cooperatives, wherein they could sell rice, had been aborted by the 1987 systematic military harassment of KMP. It is indicated therefore that there is some persistence among the peasantry in Mindoro, both men and women, to come up with collective ways by which they could have some control over what they produce. This broadens the concept of agrarian reform that goes beyond the basic concept of "land to the tiller" which can radically alter the structure of land ownership, but which also includes resistance to and transformation of other economic power relations that exert concentrated and dominant control on the produce of the land in market relations.

Resistance to Exploitative Usury

In the previous chapter I have discussed that one of the aspects of the interlocking power structures in which peasants lives are enmeshed is usury. In the absence of government subsidy, usury is an informal form of credit that the peasant

men and women generally resort to in getting the capital they need to farm. This form of informal credit has been largely under the control of the landlords, traders, and other few people in the village or rural area who have surplus money to loan out. Because of its usurious rates, usury has become a means of making money and getting rich or at least getting better-off on the backs of the poor peasantry. As I have previously discussed, for landlords or landlord-traders, usury has also become a means to get most of the harvest or also as a means to control the future harvest.

Under usury the poor peasants are hardly able to get out of debt, resulting to debt bondage, which in turn reproduces the situation wherein usury can thrive. Without the poor and a relations of production that engenders poverty among the peasantry, usury cannot sustain itself, the way it has sustained itself for example in Mindoro.

As an informal credit it has been further maintained by the absence of state formal sanctions on it. There is no formal law regulating it.

Resistance to the exploitative nature of usury has taken different forms. One form is verbal and public denouncement of it. For example, Ate Loy, who was once a local peasant organizer in a village in Mindanao region and now (at the time of my fieldwork) the elected national coordinator of AMIHAN, said that she used to denounce ("binuburgar") usurers in their local church. She would appeal to the religious norm that

usury is not following the will of God: "If we are going to base it in the Bible, practicing usury is not a help to your neighbor". Upon hearing this denouncements, Ate Loy said, the usurers got angry with her.

However, in Ate Loy's view a normative appeal to change is not enough. Verbal and public denouncement of usury must be complimented with an alternative:

> You cannot do that (referring here to public denouncement) if you have no alternative support to offer to the people. For example, demanding for lowering the interest to 10% only. Sometimes the organization can also form cooperatives.

As a concrete alternative to usury, Ate Loy explained that she attempted to initiate with her former group in Mindanao a credit cooperative. She submitted a proposal to the Women's Studies Research Center in Manila and they were able to get some funding. The peasants would pool their resources together during harvest time so that the organization could eventually have its own funds. Some of the members were able to borrow some money they needed badly. However, the vigilantes harassed their organization and the women were frightened. Hence, despite the fact that funding was made available and some success were already happening, they were unable to continue the cooperative.

In the case of KAMMI in Mindoro, there is also a desire to form a credit cooperative that could develop out of a consumer cooperative. This had been expressed, for example, by some of the women in Calintaan who thought that if they

succeed in forming their consumer cooperative they would be able to have some funds for a credit cooperative. However, one of the constraints that the women here experience is lack of bigger amount of money to begin with. So they see that it will take sometime before a credit cooperative could develop.

In the case of the village chapter of KAMMI in Magsaysay, it attempted to organize a credit cooperative, but they failed to maintain it since they lacked the financial resources. There was no outside funding, they simply attempted to rely on savings they could possibly have. But given their poverty, the members could not really in short time pool bigger amounts of money that they could circulate among the members, especially for production loans that may require at least some thousands of pesos. The peasants generally get production loans from usurers, so they view a credit cooperative that they can successfully maintain as a good alternative. But relying simply on their meager resources does not seem to work out, so that the situation implies that state intervention and external support to make their alternative succeed is called for. Although there is the Land Bank that may provide agricultural loans, only mostly big and rich peasants have been able to make use of its financial resources, since it requires collaterals for loans. At some instance a landlord-usurer may even be in a better position to make use of this formal bank credit and then loans out the money through the

informal credit system of usury. Apparently, this is the case of the barrio captain of a village in Calintaan, who one time said that he is in fact being helpful to the poor peasants because he is able to secure loans for them. While in his view he is "helping" ("tumutulong"), in reality he is making money out of these loans through usury. I see this as an indigenous feudal articulation at the village level of what Rosa Luxemburg calls "finance capital" (Brewer 1980) that ties the Third World political economy to capital accumulation. And within the context of privatization of formal credit, with little state control as well as community control on it, the formal financial market and the informal credit of usury again found interjection in the feudal-capitalist economic relations. A serious attempt from the government to make agricultural development really most beneficial to poor peasants is still much lacking. Yet, in the midst of their everyday constraints from poverty and militarization, the poor peasant women still attempt at envisioning credit cooperatives they can call their own as an alternative to fill this gap. While this action does not directly pressure the government to rechannel its financial resources to their benefit, it does indicate the women's desire to empower themselves and their resistance against capital accumulation that exploits them. It also indicates the desire of the women to resist forces that subtly makes them complicit to their own exploitation - if there are no poor willing to be exploited by the rich, the

rich will have little means to create wealth.

Cooperative Income-Generating Project: Collective Resistance to Inadequate Income

Inadequate income as a common experience, has also become a context of the women's organized action. The peasant women of KAMMI usually think of doing collective income-generating projects as ways to create additional income for the needs of their families. Being the primary caretakers of their families, they will do everything they can to find ways to bring food on the table. These women have never experienced the concept of "family wage" for a husband or for a father on which they could depend. Their husbands' or fathers' income have never been adequate for their needs. Although the headship of the family is generally still attributed to the man in the Filipino family, these peasant women, whether married or single, have actually played a significant role in securing the economic needs of their families, at least to a survival level. So, this is also one basic immediate human need that some of the leaders have observed is a context wherein they could begin gathering other peasant women together. Some of the new members that I have talked to, confirm this when they said that one of the reasons that they joined the organization was "pangkabuhayan" -- to improve their economic livelihood.

One village chapter of KAMMI in Sablayan has organized a collective sewing project to earn some money when they are

not working in the farm. They combine farm work and sewing. The women demonstrate their creativity and resourcefulness by using remnants ("retasos") that sometimes they could get from a factory in the urban area, sometimes in Manila, at a low price. They make half-slips, children's clothes, and blouses out of these remnants. I bought one of these when they were selling them at a provincial leadership training in San Jose, the capital city of Occidental Mindoro. Although the women are very creative in making something useful out of these remnants, one of the limitations they face is lack of sewing machines. They have only one sewing machine at the time of my fieldwork, so only one can sew at certain time, while others do hemlining, and cutting. So the project was looking for funding to buy a couple of sewing machines.

Through this sewing project the women involved come to relate to the market in a different way. The women sell their product through personal contact, a kind of informal trading that saves them money than if they have to maintain a central store. This type of selling seems to be effective in a village or rural community where relationships are more personal than in a large metropolis center where neighborhood relationships tend to be loose or in the U.S. where department stores are the centers of retail trading. Sometimes the consumers of the women's products are also members of KAMMI and their families. Of course not all the members of KAMMI can afford to buy their products because they themselves lack

money for food, so they also look for buyers beyond their immediate organizational contact.

As a collective project the women divide among themselves the earnings from the project and they set aside 10% of their earnings as organizational fund that they can draw from for organizational purposes or on matters the organization would see fit. As the women help themselves, they also help the organization. And this is what makes KAMMI's income-generating projects more than just a survival strategy, because they partly meet not only immediate economic needs, but also serve their organizational political ends. They have both personal and political ends. Here then, is a concretization of the idea that the personal is also political.

This local chapter has been able to at least begin this sewing project because they were able to get initial capital from the Women's Desk of Mindoro Institute for Development. It hopes that in the long run it will accumulate its own funds and be self-sufficient.

On the provincial level, KAMMI also hopes to raise or acquire funds adequate enough to financially support starting capital for the local chapters' socio-economic projects, but which they have to pay up slowly without interest so the funds can circulate to as many local projects of as many local chapters in need.

In Calintaan, another village chapter of KAMMI organized

a collective income-generating project on making dried and salted fish. The women would salt and dry the fishes, and wrap them in clear plastic and sell them by package. Again the women sometimes also rely on informal marketing to sell their products. Sometimes they sell them to other peasants during conferences. For example, on the end of July 1989, Ate Ara who represented KAMMI at the National Council Conference in the urban sector of Manila brought approximately 100 packages of these dried-salted fishes and sold them to those who were at the conference. I bought some myself and tasted how well the women did it. Everyone who tasted the fish, said it was better than the ones they could buy in the public market.

Cooperative income-generating project also is a strategy of organizing the women. Since it immediately responds to an immediate need, it has become an effective initial activity to bring women together. However, it is only one aspect of KAMMI's program.

Cooperative income-generating projects normally begin with training sessions where peasants learn some knowledge and understanding that may be useful in managing their collective project successfully, such as doing simple accounting or some technical knowledge relevant to the particular project. These training sessions are suited to the particular project the women plan to do.